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1896

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PINERO, and a Synopsis of Playbills of the year by
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THE
THEATRICAL 'WORLD'
OF 1896

WITH AN INTRODUCTION
"ON THE NEED FOR AN ENDOWED THEATRE"

BY
WILLIAM ARCHER

AND A SYNOPSIS OF PLAYBILLS OF THE YEAR
By HENRY GEORGE HIBBERT



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INTRODUCTION.

ON THE NEED FOR AN ENDOWED THEATRE.

MANY people, and I myself among the number, have inquired from time to time whether an Endowed Theatre is possible or desirable in England. The day for such speculations is past. An Endowed Theatre is obviously possible; and I propose to show that it is not only desirable, but necessary, if we are not to lose, without hope of retrieving, all the ground which of late years we have gained.

PROVISIONAL DEFINITION.

"What do you mean by an Endowed Theatre?" This question will be answered in detail later on. Roughly speaking, I mean a theatre which, apart from the actual sale of seats, receives a certain yearly income, no matter from what source or sources, on condition that it fulfils, or strives honestly to fulfil, certain artistic functions. I mean a public institu-

tion—not necessarily or even probably an Imperial or Municipal institution—devoted, not to the enrichment (or impoverishment) of individual speculators, but to the service of the English Drama in all its worthier manifestations. I mean a popular and self-supporting enterprise, certainly; but one with a reserve behind it, enabling and obliging it, when necessary, to sacrifice momentary profit to artistic policy.

So much by way of provisional definition. Let me now try to establish my main argument—to wit, that what was hitherto a mere pious aspiration has become, within the last two or three years, an imperative and urgent necessity.

THE NEW FACTOR.

What, then, is the new element in the case that so potently reinforces all that has hitherto been urged in favour of an Endowed Theatre? Simply the fact that *the modern English drama has outgrown the great public, and must, on pain of dwindling away for lack of sustenance, find a medium through which it can appeal to a lesser, but still very considerable, public, which is ready and eager to respond to the appeal.*

THE ARGUMENT IN 1889: THE CLASSIC DRAMA.

In the year 1889 I contributed to the *Fortnightly Review* "A Plea for an Endowed Theatre." Then the weight of my argument rested on the uses of such

an institution, or institutions, in keeping alive for us our classical drama, and bringing us occasionally into touch with the classics of other nations. Comparing England with Germany, I showed in detail that the record of the Berlin Schauspielhaus alone during the first four months of 1888 "contained more matter "worthy the attention of thinking men than the whole "twelve months' record of our thirty London theatres." When I added to the record of the Schauspielhaus that of the Deutsches Theater (an unendowed establishment conducted on the repertory principle) the disparity became altogether overwhelming. These two Berlin theatres had, within four months, "sampled" the dramatic literature of the world in a catholic spirit such as no two or no twenty London playhouses, under existing conditions, could possibly emulate; and it was on this contrast that, in 1889, I mainly based my position. The contrast still subsists. Were it worth while, I could draw an even more crushing comparison between the dramatic fare of London during 1896 and that of Berlin or any other German city of the first rank. But it is not worth while; for, though the argument with regard to the classic drama remains of undiminished strength, it is no longer the stronghold of our position. We require as much as ever a theatre to keep nobly alive for us the dramatic literature of the world, and especially that noblest branch of it which we call our own; but the

drama of the past has waited so long for such an institution that it could afford to wait a little longer ; it is the drama of the future which instantly and imperatively demands release from the thralldom of existing conditions.

THE ARGUMENT IN 1889 : THE MODERN DRAMA A
PROBLEMATIC QUANTITY.

In my "Plea" of 1889 I did not forget to plead for the living playwright ; but I argued rather from what might be hoped of him than from what he had actually accomplished. I dwelt on his paralysing limitations, but was unable to point to any particular instance in which he had very clearly shown either the will or the power to struggle against this paralysis. Here is the gist of what I said ; it will be seen that in enumerating the depressing influences, I spoke with tremulous hope rather than sturdy faith of the existence of any very original talent to be depressed :—

"What class of modern work, then, would the non-commercial theatre welcome and foster? Why, "plays that appeal to the thousands, not to the tens of thousands; plays that interest intelligent people "without being sufficiently sensational, or amusing, or "sentimental, or vulgar to run for two hundred and "fifty nights; plays that have no star-part to tempt an

“actor-manager; plays in which the female interest is
“weak; plays that end, and must end, unhappily;
“plays, in fine, that do not fulfil all the thousand and
“one trivial conditions on which popular success is
“supposed to depend. The commercial manager is
“like the king in the nursery tale, who invites all the
“fairies to the christening of his child. If but one of
“these potent influences is absent, he will go no
“further in the matter. ‘Strangle the brat,’ he says,
“‘or throw it out into the streets; it has no chance of
“life, and I wash my hands of it.’ Many of the in-
“fluences (not all) are in themselves mere super-
“stitions; but the very fact that managers and critics
“believe in them gives them a baneful potency. The
“non-commercial theatre should aim at freeing authors
“from the tyranny of the Great Public, by allowing
“them to appeal, when they are so minded, to the
“Lesser Public. A painter, a poet, or a novelist can,
“if he pleases, make sacrifices to his ideal. He may
“produce work which he knows will not please the
“great public, finding his reward in the approbation
“of his own artistic conscience. His work is there,
“it exists, even though it be skied at the Academy or
“boycotted by Mr. Mudie. But the dramatist, under
“present conditions, cannot, be he ever so willing,
“ignore the prejudices of the crowd. In order to
“exist at all (for a play in manuscript cannot properly
“be said to exist) his works must all be pot-boilers or

“would-be pot-boilers. He must write with the fear
“of the Philistine before his eyes, else he will never
“gain a hearing. One great function of the non-
“commercial theatre should be to encourage dramatists
“to play for smaller stakes than two-hundred or three-
“hundred-night successes. Few plays of modern life
“require such expensive mounting as would not be
“covered, and more than covered, by ten, fifteen, or
“twenty fairly-attended performances in the course of
“the season. If a play happened to attract the greater
“as well as the lesser public, so much the better. It
“would be played three or four nights a week until the
“first flush of popularity declined, and would then pass
“into the standing repertory. But the great point is
“that a success of esteem should be esteemed a
“success, and that plays should not be accepted or
“declined solely on the ground of their having, or not
“having, ‘money in them.’

“Many playwrights, no doubt, have become so
“inured to their thralldom as to be unconscious of it.
“They have lost, if they ever had, the power of even
“imagining an audience more alert, more intelligent,
“more open-minded than the Great Public. But I
“appeal to the leaders of the stage—to Mr. Gilbert,
“Mr. Grundy, Mr. Jones, Mr. Pinero—to say whether
“they have not again and again found themselves
“consciously sacrificing artistic considerations to the
“necessity of conciliating the masses. Have they not

“altogether rejected powerful and interesting themes, which, for one reason or another, could not be treated in accordance with established formulas? In plays they have actually written, have they never dragged in ‘female interest,’ or ‘comic relief,’ or some other statutory ingredient, to the serious detriment of the artistic whole? Have they never brought plays to a lame and impotent ‘happy ending,’ which should, by rights, have issued tragically? Would they not even now welcome an opportunity to atone for their pot-boilers by putting their deepest thought, their sternest logic, their keenest criticism of life into a play which, though it might not bring a halfpenny into their pockets, would embody, for once, their artistic ideal?”

THE NEW MOVEMENT: “THE PROFLIGATE.”

These words were published in May 1889. Oddly enough, they must have gone to press almost on the very day, April 24th, when *The Profligate*, by Mr. A. W. Pinero, was produced at the Garrick Theatre—on the very day, that is, when the movement towards a more thoughtful and virile form of drama definitely set in. We now look back upon *The Profligate* with a smile, in which I am sure the author of *The Benefit of the Doubt* will not refuse to join. But in spirit, if not technique, it did

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unmistakably mark a new departure. It was an expression of a strong, and even defiant, artistic will. It was the play Mr. Pinero wanted to write, not the play which he thought the public wanted to see. The will was as yet stronger than the power, though that was far from inconsiderable ; but in any case the will was the main thing, a new force manifesting itself unequivocally for the first time. Had the article above cited been written a fortnight later, or had *The Profligate* been produced a fortnight earlier, my tone would have been very different.* Looking back, at this distance of time, one clearly realises—what one already divined even at the moment—that Mr. Pinero had only waited until his position was firmly established by the success of his Court farces and *Sweet Lavender*, before giving utterance, at all hazards, to his artistic individuality. And here again an examination of dates is interesting and instructive. *The Profligate*—very clearly a deliberate step in advance—was produced on April 24th, 1889; the production of *A Doll's House*, which as clearly initiated what may be called the Ibsen movement,

* To prove this, let me say that on reading over my *undated* copy of the *Fortnightly* article, I was convinced, on purely internal evidence, that it must have been written before the production of *The Profligate*. It showed no trace of the larger hope for the future of the modern drama with which, as I well remembered, that event inspired me.

did not take place until June 7th, six weeks later. Thus it is historically false to find in Ibsen the stimulus to Mr. Pinero's progress. It is of course an open question how far his later development may have been influenced by Ibsen. For my part, I hold that the direct influence of the older upon the younger dramatist has been very slight, though no doubt the Ibsen movement and the Independent Theatre may have pioneered the way for *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray*. This point, however, is arguable; what is beyond argument is that Mr. Pinero had given the plainest evidence of the will and the power to strive after better things before he knew anything of Ibsen, and at a time when "the Ibsen movement" was non-existent and unforeseen.

THE NEW MOVEMENT: AN EIGHT YEARS' RECORD.

Even from the first, Mr. Pinero did not stand alone. Three days after the production of *The Profligate*, and while my above-quoted article was still in the press, Mr. Henry Arthur Jones gave evidence of a no less strenuous ambition in the production of *Wealth* at the Haymarket. The play was not very skilful, and failed; but Mr. Jones worked on undaunted, experimenting with varying success, but seldom content to do merely the safe thing. Mr. Pinero, meanwhile, "hastened slowly." He let his talent and his public ripen, and four

years elapsed between *The Profligate* and *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray*. Whatever we may think of this play—and it has been severely criticised—no sane critic will deny that with it the modern English drama for the first time took its place in the European movement. It was comparable with the best French and German work, and with the best only. Even those who most condemned it, had to admit that they did so by a resort to standards which it would have been ridiculous to apply to any other English play of our time. Leading foreign critics, too, have accepted it as work of the first rank. M. Faguet in France, Dr. Brandes in Denmark, have praised it at least as highly as any of Mr. Pinero's countrymen. And though it remains the most entirely fortunate thing Mr. Pinero has done, each of his subsequent plays has in some respects shown a marked advance upon it. In my opinion, indeed, the first two acts of *The Benefit of the Doubt* as far surpass *Mrs. Tanqueray* as *Mrs. Tanqueray* surpassed *The Profligate*. While Mr. Pinero, then, has steadily progressed, and Mr. Jones more fitfully, other playwrights have not been slow to join in the movement. Mr. Sydney Grundy, a somewhat older man, has shown a marked revival of the ambition which the depressing influences of the 'seventies and early 'eighties had well-nigh extinguished. Mr. R. C. Carton and Mr. Louis Parker have done work which, if it does not now stand in

the front rank, is well in advance of the best work of twenty years ago. And we have in Mr. Esmond and Mr. Bernard Shaw playwrights of unquestionable originality, though as yet we can hardly guess how far it may carry them.

THE LIMIT OF PROGRESS AT HAND.

There has been progress then: great, one may almost say marvellous progress: and that is the basis of my argument. In 1889 it was by no means clear that our dramatists had sufficient stuff in them to be seriously hampered by the adverse conditions; in 1897 it is abundantly clear. The astonishing skill they have shown in dancing in chains makes it trebly evident that, if their talent is ever to attain its full development, they must be allowed the opportunity of now and then slipping these encumbrances. They have very nearly reached the limit of possible accomplishment in their fettered art; and when the limit is reached, they must either shake off their gyves or begin to decline in energy, vitality, and power.

THE "BLIGHT" OF 1896 NOT SPECIALLY OMINOUS.

The past year, as this volume proves only too clearly, has been a year of "blight" in the theatrical world; but that is not my reason for holding that we are near the limits of possible development under existing conditions. Religious vulgarity, romantic

puerility, and musical frivolity have indeed been rampant, to the almost total exclusion of serious art; and one cannot but look back with regret on so barren a season. But crazes there will always be, and it is mere chance that has brought three such manias to a head, as it were, in a single year. Already they are correcting themselves, and narrowing down in place of widening. *The Sign of the Cross* was acclaimed by simple-minded critics, clerical and lay, as a symptom of a new "spirituality" in public taste. But, behold! all attempts to work the "spiritual" vein, apart from the sheer crass melodrama, have ended in signal failure. Mr. Wilson Barrett remains sole patentee and purveyor of "religious" sensationalism; and the general economy of the theatrical world is in no way affected by the fact that a large mass of half-educated people are found to relish melodrama all the more when it is larded with scriptural unction. Cape-and-sword drama has not yet run its course, but one or two more *Red Robes* will certainly exhaust it. In the nature of things, there is nothing people sooner tire of than lay figures decked out in feathers and frippery. As for musical farce, the inundation is rapidly shrinking, and the stream will presently return to its ordinary channel. Stage after stage is being reclaimed from the list of "places where they sing," and several syndicates have found to their cost that it was they themselves and not the public that

were really "crazy" for up-to-date extravaganza. There is nothing to appal us, then, in these manias. Already, as I write, the whirligig of time is bringing the serious drama to the front again, and Mr. Pinero is soon to make an appearance at the St. James's, Mr. Jones at the Criterion. No doubt there will be a new craze in the autumn, and yet another this time next year. Where there is a vast public of sheep-like habits—every one rushing blindly this way or that, simply because every one else is rushing—any play for which chance or skill secures a sufficiently penetrative and pervasive advertisement tends to beget a craze. The managers are no less imitative than their patrons, and are always ready (the critics aiding and abetting) to persuade themselves that the public craves for one style of play and no other. But the one thing the public really craves for is variety, and the truly successful impresario is he who invents or stumbles upon a new craze, not he who simply rushes to cling on to the skirts of a *Gaiety Girl* or a *Red Robe*.

The craze, in short, is an inevitable phenomenon wherever there is a huge horde of thoughtless and pleasure-loving mortals, swept now to one side, now to another, by sheer force of gregarious instinct. And as the crowd is ever various and mutable, and as the brain is, after all, a portion of the human organism which may be exercised, from time to time,

with a certain amount of pleasure, the rational drama need never despair of having its turn among all the competing forms of entertainment. It may be depressed for a space, as it has been during 1896; but the next turn of Fortune's wheel will bring it to the top again. So it is in no momentary panic, begotten of transient circumstances, that I declare a Repertory Theatre essential to the farther development of our gallantly struggling English drama. I take my stand upon the plain facts of political economy, or, in other words, of human nature.

ART FOR THE MULTITUDE MEANS MEDIOCRE ART.

Can there be any plainer fact than that the highest art does not, in its novelty at any rate, appeal to the greatest number? or, in other words, that delicate artistic perception is not a universally, or even a very widely, diffused gift? If, then, a certain form of art is compelled, as the first condition of its existence, to make immediate appeal to a vast multitude of people, it follows that, do what they will, the practitioners of that art cannot possibly rise above mediocrity.

This is precisely the situation of the English dramatist. He is at present compelled, on pain of sheer extinction, to enlist the immediate suffrages, or, in plainer English, to gather in the punctual half-crowns, of a far larger body of people than can

possibly be expected to have any relish for the most delicate forms of art. On the other hand, in a community like ours, there exists, beyond all question, a public within the public, which is capable of enjoying and paying for the very best that theatrical art can do. Under present conditions, the dramatist has no means of getting at this public, this public has no means of bringing its demands to bear upon the dramatist. The Repertory Theatre, which must at first be to some extent an Endowed Theatre, is required to afford a meeting-place for the artist-playwright and the art-loving (as opposed to the merely show-loving) public.

THE MANAGERS POWERLESS.

Pray observe that I am not attacking or criticising the actor-manager or the commercial impresario. Cases do, no doubt, occur in which they seem to conduct their business with insufficient intelligence; but, taking our leading actor-managers as a body, one gladly admits that they do for art all that can reasonably be expected of them. They are the slaves of their conditions. They are forced to bid for great successes, because small successes are no successes at all. So inert, unwieldy, and unselective is our overgrown public, that, practically speaking, either everybody or nobody goes to see a given

play. You must run your hundred nights at the very least, or you have scored a failure,—you have probably lost money, certainly prestige. And so deplorable are the conditions that a manager cannot even, on the strength of a great success, treat himself to a little artistic experiment. If he ventures upon a “trial matinée,” his evening receipts at once fall off. It is the old story: “to him that hath shall be given;” success comes only with a rush, and no sooner does the sapient public suspect that the rush is over than it loses interest in a play, and the rush is over indeed. How far I am from holding the managers responsible for the existing state of things may be seen in the very fact that I look for salvation only in a new mechanism, or, more precisely, a new fulcrum for the application of a new leverage. If individual intelligence were sufficient to break the vicious circle, there would be no need to agitate for co-operation and endowment.

“THE LAW OF THE HUNDRED THOUSAND.”

Let us deal in round numbers, and suppose that a “good house” at a theatre like the Haymarket or the St. James’s means 1000 people. To rank as a success at all, a play must run, to good houses, at least 100 nights. That is to say, it must in the course of less than four months be seen by 100,000 people; and a great majority of these people must

take considerable pleasure in it, else the first audiences will advise others not to go to it, and, after dragging on for a month or six weeks, the play will be withdrawn, a confessed failure. Now, it is absurd to imagine that there are in London, at any one time, 100,000 playgoers of keen intelligence and delicate artistic perception—capable, in short, of appreciating the highest order of drama. If there were such a public, London would be the most artistic city on record—a modern Athens in very deed. Nowhere and at no time has the best work found so large a public centred in one spot and waiting to acclaim it. Even in Paris, with its cosmopolitan population of theatre-goers, it may be said, roughly, that the maximum of immediate success ever attained by a serious play is about equivalent to the minimum demanded of an English author.

THE EFFECT OF SUCH A LAW ON FICTION.

Let us look at the other arts, and enquire what would become of them under similar conditions. It is perfectly evident that in sculpture, painting, and poetry, no tolerable work would ever be done if the artist were forced to bid for the immediate applause of 100,000 people, on pain of being denied all opportunity of continuing the practice of his art. It is difficult, however, to reduce pictures or statues and plays to a common denominator; in the case of

prose fiction there is no such difficulty. Now that the three-volume form is practically dead, the analogy between a play and a novel is very close; for the average price of a seat at a West End theatre is between four and five shillings, and that is just about the price paid by the general public for a six-shilling novel. Is there any novelist who dreams of achieving the feat required of the playwright, and selling 100,000 copies of a book in London alone, within four months? Why, even Miss Marie Corelli, appealing not to London alone, but to the United Kingdom and the Colonies, does not sell at that rate; how much less Mr. Meredith or Mr. Hardy! It is true that for every seat sold only one person sees a play, while it is probable that two or three people, on an average, read every copy of a novel. This disparity, however, is far more than counterbalanced by the fact that the novel is on sale from New Zealand to Vancouver, while the play is sold in one shop only. If it fails to find its 100,000 purchasers on the spot, the chances are it never reaches a wider public at all, or comes to it stigmatised in advance as a failure. I think we may safely say that not even Miss Marie Corelli finds *within the same radius and the same time* half as large an audience as the playwright is required to find; while in the case of Mr. Meredith or Mr. Hardy the disproportion is simply overwhelming.

But *Barabbas* is to *The Egoist* or *Jude the Obscure* as *The Sign of the Cross* to *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray*. Thus the Law of the Hundred Thousand, if I may call it so, absolutely excludes from the stage any work that is at all comparable to the best fiction, and renders it little short of a miracle if our best plays are found to be, on the whole, superior to our worst romances.

Take the same contrast from another point of view. Suppose that a playwright of genius comparable to Mr. Meredith's were to appear among us to-morrow. Suppose, I mean, that the bent of his talent were such that he excelled in the dramatic and not in the narrative form, and wrote plays fulfilling the conditions of great drama in exactly the same measure in which Mr. Meredith's novels fulfil the conditions of great fiction. What would be his fate? After weary years spent in playing battledore with the actor-managers, and bandying to and fro a brown-paper-parcel shuttlecock, he might possibly get one of his plays produced. It would attract very little attention; a few critics would praise it warmly and be laughed at for their pains; the hundred thousand would resolutely look another way; it would run just long enough to permit of the rehearsal of a cape-and-sword romance, and would be withdrawn before the twenty-five or thirty thousand who would be capable of understanding and enjoying it

had so much as heard of its existence. Something analogous to this was the fortune of Mr. Meredith's first essays in fiction, including some of his masterpieces; but he was able to work on doggedly, and the masterpieces, if their sale was small, were merely biding their time, and gradually finding out their public. The dramatic Meredith, on the other hand, would be not only depressed but annihilated by his failure. His *Richard Feverel*, once withdrawn from the bills, would, to all intents and purposes, cease to exist; it would avail him little to print it, for the public, even the best public, is but slowly re-acquiring the habit of reading plays. The managers would steadfastly refuse his other works, just as the publishers would have refused Mr. Meredith's novels had they required to stake from £5000 to £10,000 (to say nothing of prestige) on each venture. Mr. Meredith, had the publishers entirely rejected him, might, without being a very rich man, have become his own publisher; unless the theatrical Meredith happened to be a millionaire, he could not dream of becoming his own manager. In short, his talent would be absolutely and hopelessly gagged. He might pass under the yoke of the Law of the Hundred Thousand, making more or less clumsy and cynical bids for the applause of the multitude; or he might become a third- or fourth-rate novelist, the born dramatist being no more necessarily fitted

to excel in narrative than the born narrator to excel in drama. In either case, the sum-total would be a genius wasted for want of a very simple mechanism to enable him to seek his public and his public to find him. For a public there assuredly is, with the brains to understand and the money to support the Meredith of the stage, if only you provide them with a recognised rallying point.

“And a Meredith!” the reader may add, with a shrug. Well, I do not say that I can lay my hand upon him at the moment. But this I do say, that our present theatrical machinery is constructed with what one might almost call diabolical ingenuity to grind down Merediths into Marie Corellis; and furthermore, that we have among us writers for the stage—some famous, others as yet almost unknown—whose talent entitles them to stand much nearer the Meredith than the Corelli end of the scale.

FORWARD OR BACKWARD? NO MIDDLE COURSE.

And now let us plainly realise that if they cannot advance, our playwrights must of necessity retreat, and it must become more and more impossible for new talent to develop on truly artistic lines. It is only the lifeless, clockwork play that a man can go on producing, year out, year in, according to a definite formula, neither improving nor degenerating, until

age comes in to impair his mere manual dexterity. That was the method of Scribe; that is, in the main, the method of Sardou. Their clockwork toys, when put on the market, may not all prove equally popular; but the difference lies in the make-up of the mannikins; the works inside them are all stamped to pattern. Dumas, on the other hand, was always developing, experimenting. Some of his experiments were financially unsuccessful, some artistically, some both; but he never sat down to do over again the thing he had once done; he paid no heed to the voice of managers, critics, or public, saying "thus far shalt thou go and no further." Conceive Ibsen forced, as a condition of having his plays produced, to keep them all on the level of (say) *The Pillars of Society*, and forbidden to transcend that limit either in thought or in technique! He would probably have ceased to write at all; or, if driven by necessity to work at his soulless trade, would have become a more or less skilled confectioner of what Mr. Bernard Shaw calls "mechanical rabbits." Now it is precisely the strong point of our little group of English playwrights that their work is not mechanical. They do not keep on inventing and solving purposeless problems on the frowsy old chessboard of Scribe; they do not, like T. W. Robertson and his school, turn out the same play over and over again, with the characters re-christened. Whatever their defects and

limitations, they are thoroughly alive, restlessly bent on achieving more and more potent and vivid self-expression. They have their eyes on the world around them, and seek to interpret it as they see it. Their brains are no mere theatrical lumber-rooms, repositories of second-hand characters, situations, effects, sentiments and morals, to be rummaged out and furbished up as occasion requires; rather they are busy laboratories, converting to artistic uses the raw material of life. That is why I maintain, in the teeth of all scepticism and scoffing, that we are not at the end of a spurt, but at the beginning of a movement. Literary criticism has so long been accustomed to ignore the stage, that it receives with ridicule the suggestion that any actable and acted play can possibly be worth a second thought. I venture to prophesy, with all respect, that literary criticism will soon have to alter its point of view: and my confidence is founded, not so much on what has actually been done, as on the alert and ardent tone of mind which prevails among the men who are writing for the stage. But the movement will come to little enough if they are simply to fling themselves against the dead wall of existing commercial requirements, and fall back stunned and bleeding from the shock. Unless we can make a breach or open a gate in that wall, we are in a hopeless blind-alley, and all our energy

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and aspiration must presently sink into cynical disillusionment.

LIMIT OF ADVANCE ALREADY REACHED.

It is understating the matter to say that we are nearing the limit of possible advance under present conditions. We may rather be said to have reached it some time ago. So long as the Law of the Hundred Thousand remains paramount at every point, we certainly cannot get beyond *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray*; and it is only by a fluke that we have got so far. The popular success of that play was due to its comparative rather than its positive merits. It marked such a sudden and seven-league stride in advance that it startled the critics out of their habitual superiority. An unprecedented chorus of praise went up: the new play was as masterly as it was audacious, and the new actress was as great as she was beautiful. Thus Mrs. Tanqueray and Mrs. Campbell leaped into celebrity in a single night, and the Hundred Thousand, twice or three times told, flocked to do them homage. But such a combination of fortunate circumstances cannot speedily recur. A play as good as *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray* would be discounted by the very fact of coming after it, and would not be welcomed with such a shout of surprise; a decidedly better play would in all likelihood alienate the majority of the critics, and irritate or bewilder the Hundred

Thousand. I do not cite in proof of this the comparative insuccess of *Mrs. Ebbsmith* and *The Benefit of the Doubt*; for though both were in many ways an advance on *Mrs. Tanqueray*, both were also in some measure defective; and one is fain to hope (however illogically) that it was their defects rather than their qualities which combined with unfortunate acting to cut short their career. Extrinsic circumstances, in a word, prevented these plays from ranking as test cases; we can draw no positive conclusion either from their success, in so far as they succeeded, or from their failure, in so far as they failed. I simply look at the Hundred Thousand—at the people who flock, I will not say to *The Sign of the Cross* and *The Circus Girl*, but to *The Red Robe* and *The Prisoner of Zenda*—and, taking a general estimate of their tastes and habits of mind, I say with absolute conviction *these people are incapable of appreciating anything finer and subtler than “The Second Mrs. Tanqueray,” and it was only a rare concourse of happy chances that made even “Mrs. Tanqueray” popular with the multitude.**

* My argument at this point may seem inconsistent with the tenor of my letter to Mr. Sydney Grundy (Article VIII. of the present volume). It is true that I was there cheering on a forlorn hope, or rather trying to hearten a despondent warrior; whereas here I am attempting a calm strategic survey of the whole situation. But if there be any inconsistency, it is verbal, not practical. The purport of Mr. Grundy's article was to urge a return to the golden mediocrity of the well-made play; the

THE LAW OF THE HUNDRED THOUSAND MUST BE
ELUDED.

If we are to make any substantial and permanent advance beyond this point—and there is no alternative between advance and retreat—we must enable dramatists to appeal to a public consisting of (say) a tenth part of the Hundred Thousand, with some fifteen or twenty thousand more recruited from the class which now very rarely goes to the theatre, simply because it takes no interest in *Red Robes* and *Circus Girls*. Can any one doubt that there are in London at the present moment 25,000 people capable of relishing really delicate dramatic work, if only they knew where to look for it? Now 25,000 people at an average of four shillings a-head mean £5000—a

purport of my reply was to point out that this would be suicidal; and that is equally the purport of the present argument. Salvation does not lie in the artificial or the old-fashioned. There is even less demand for Scribe than for Ibsen. If our artist-playwrights are to compete at all with the entertainment-mongers, it will certainly not be by trying back to antiquated methods, but by struggling onwards and rallying their own public around them. Besides, though one playwright may have reached the limit of possible progress under present conditions, it would be sheer inconsequence to argue that therefore the whole body ought to execute a right-about-face. I hope—nay, I am sure—that Mr. Grundy will write his *Second Mrs. Tanqueray* before he seriously thinks of putting into practice the retrograde policy which he advocates in theory.

sum which would scarcely spell ruin for the enterprise or beggary for the author. And of course this 25,000 would be merely the nucleus of the public which a Repertory Theatre would gather round it. This is the minimum audience which could be relied upon for any play that was not an absolute artistic failure. The theatre neither could, would, nor should restrict itself to the production of plays that are above the heads of the multitude. Both in the classical and in the modern drama it should aim at "great successes"—productions which should have their three or four repetitions a week until they had reached eighty or a hundred performances in the season. The point is not to have *no* runs but to have no *unbroken* runs, and to establish as the standard of honourable success something less heroic than the instant conquest of the Hundred Thousand.

A NEW ADVERSE INFLUENCE: THE SUBURBAN
THEATRE.

Let me defer for a few pages, however, a more detailed forecast of the working of a Repertory Theatre, while I call attention to a new element in theatrical life which is rapidly rendering the position of the artist-playwright more than ever precarious. Within the last three or four years, the Suburban Theatre has become a recognised and flourishing institution. No suburb of any importance but has

now its handsome and commodious playhouse, served, like the provincial theatres, by touring companies.* The addition to the total theatrical accommodation of the metropolitan area must be enormous; and even the old East End and transpontine theatres are beginning to rely on touring companies with West End pieces, instead of having their own stock companies and producing their own plays. It is now quite possible, indeed, for an actor to make a long "tour" without ever leaving his lodgings in the West Central district: he has only to take a hansom or tramcar in a different direction every week or fortnight, that being the general duration of the suburban "stands." Now what is the result of this decentralisation of the drama? A certain increase, no doubt, in the aggregate theatrical public, but a clear diminution in the public of the West End theatres. As yet, perhaps, the stalls and circle may not be greatly affected. It is not yet "the thing" for the wealthier classes in the suburbs to patronise their local playhouses. But the change is already marked, I believe, in the cheaper parts of the house. The clerk or shopman who has a handsome theatre at his very door, where

* Stratford-at-Bow, Islington, Holloway, Camden Town, Kilburn, Ealing, Hammersmith, Richmond, Clapham, Camberwell, Brixton, Croydon, Greenwich, have all either new or greatly enlarged theatres—and that does not exhaust the list.

he can get a more comfortable seat for his shilling or half-crown than he can at a West End playhouse, thinks twice and thrice before he will face the long omnibus ride to Charing Cross, and the weary midnight journey home again, merely for the sake of seeing a given play a little earlier than he otherwise would, and with a somewhat more expensive cast. It needs some very potent attraction to drag him from the circumference to the centre: something that the local theatre cannot possibly offer him: an exceptionally gorgeous setting, or a favourite comedian who never visits the suburbs, or a special combination of popular performers. The result is that it becomes increasingly difficult for any quiet, non-sensational, non-spectacular play to secure a long run. It needs something glaring and flaring to lure Brixton and Brondesbury away from the playhouse round the corner. Managers of a certain class may recoup themselves in the increased profits arising from their country companies—their “A,” “B,” and “C” combinations. But it is, of course, a comparatively low class of play that is most in demand at these outlying theatres—melodrama, screaming farce, or musical extravaganza. Thus the whole tendency of the suburban movement is to limit the demand for the higher and more serious order of work. Quiet refinement will neither attract the suburbs to the centre nor pay for exportation

from the centre to the suburbs. This new commercial influence, in brief, is as hostile as all the rest to the artist-playwright, and increases the difficulty of his position.

AN ENDOWED THEATRE: THE LAISSEZ-FAIRE
OBJECTION.

It is now time to look more closely into the principle and details of the proposed remedy—a Repertory Theatre, relieved by endowment or guarantee, during its probationary period at any rate, from the immediate pressure of commercial conditions.

One is met at the outset by the *laissez-faire* objection: the idea that art, like any other branch of human industry, ought to be regulated by the law of supply and demand—a force as inevitable as gravitation, with which it is at once impious and imbecile to dream of tampering. But as life consists in the power to counteract and utilise the law of gravitation, to which we do not passively yield ourselves up till we are dead, so the higher life of art has always involved suspensions, modifications, and adaptations of the law of supply and demand. Even in England, art endowments meet us on every hand—imperial, municipal, and private. Every public picture-gallery, every museum that is not purely technical, implies an endowment of art. All the

arguments which justify the maintenance of the National Gallery, would equally justify the maintenance of a National Theatre. All the arguments which justify the Corporations of Liverpool, Manchester, and Birmingham in supporting the Art Galleries of these cities, would apply with equal force to the subsidising of Municipal Theatres. But in the land of Shakespeare—which is also the land of Milton and Bunyan—state or municipal endowment is far outside the range of practical politics; Puritanism and reactionary licence settled that question two hundred years ago, and we need not waste time in regrets. It remains for art-lovers to combine (in greater or smaller numbers), not to upset the operation of the law of supply and demand, or any other benign dispensation of Providence, but simply to organise and render effective their own demand for forms of art and modes of presentation which the existing theatres do not supply. In the musical world such combinations are familiar; they are equally possible, and certainly no less needful, in the domain of the drama.

THE LONDON STAGE ALREADY ENDOWED.

Nay, they already occur every day—only they are inspired by inartistic motives, and work, as a rule, to inartistic ends. It is by no means the case that

endowment is alien to either the spirit or the practice of the English stage. The following passage, quoted from a recent article in the *Fortnightly Review* (January 1897), puts the matter, to the best of my belief, in a true light:—"An endowed theatre is not "a dream; it is an existing reality: one may almost "say the only existing reality. A belief has somehow "gained currency to the effect that the English stage "is a self-supporting institution. Some are even of "opinion that its strict subjection to the law of supply "and demand, in all its divine simplicity, is the "crowning glory of the British Drama. This is a "mistaken theory based upon an imaginary fact. "Take it all round, the British drama, or at any rate "the London stage, is not self-supporting at all. Of "all departments of commerce, the play-trade is that "in which the law of supply and demand is most "persistently suspended and defied. It is, of course, "impossible to establish a detailed and authoritative "theatrical budget; but I am very sure that if a "complete profit-and-loss account of our two dozen "West End theatres for any given season could be "audited, certified and published, it would make "the devotees of the 'cheesemongering' theory of "management open their eyes so wide that they "would scarcely be able to close them again. If "ever there was a 'bounty-fed' article of commerce "it is the drama of the West End theatres. The

“capital which goes into the cheese-trade is, so to
“speak, automatically regulated by the prospect of a
“fair return at current rates. There is no such
“charm in the act of cheesemongering as to make
“people crowd into the market and lose fortune
“after fortune rather than desist from selling cheeses.
“But in play-mongering, or rather entertainment-
“mongering, there are a score of allurements which
“set commercial sanity at nought, and attract capital
“out of all proportion to any reasonable hope of
“return. A few theatres, it is true, are, on the whole,
“fairly prosperous, though even they have their
“serious fluctuations, and probably do not pay a
“larger interest on capital than would be demanded
“in any other enterprise of equal precariousness.
“But if (say) six out of the twenty-four theatres may
“be set down as steadily remunerative, it can
“scarcely be doubted that at the remaining eighteen,
“taking one year with another, the losses far exceed
“the gains. No one who is behind the scenes at
“all will deny that incredible sums are squandered
“on the London stage with still more incredible
“foolishness. In other words, if the drama were
“not endowed, some seventy-five per cent. of our
“theatres would cease to exist. The drama *is*
“endowed—spasmodically and stupidly, but lavishly
“enough in all conscience. Is it, then, so utterly
“incredible that one day or other a ‘backer’ should

“be found to endow a theatre with brains as well as
“money? He need not have a very long purse—or,
“more precisely, he must have a long purse, but he
“will not be called upon to empty it. For it is quite
“a mistake to imagine that an endowed theatre
“would never become self-supporting. The endow-
“ment is required during the experimental stage, to
“start the enterprise, to establish it, and to give it
“time to create its public and form its tradition.
“That once done, it ought, in a city like London—or
“*they* ought in a country like England—to be entirely
“self-supporting. And the man who has the insight
“to recognise his opportunity and the energy to
“seize it, will rear himself an imperishable monu-
“ment at a very slight expense—except of brains.”

CREATION OR DEVELOPMENT?

We cannot afford to wait, however, for this not impossible, but sufficiently improbable, personage. He would scarce be an Anglo-Saxon, indeed, who should deduce such an institution from first principles, create it at one flourish of his cheque-book, and plant it in our midst, with budget and bye-laws ready-made. Our national temperament is disinclined to, and distrustful of, such romantic adventures. The whole course of our history has led us to believe in development rather than creation; we prefer tentative to ideal effort. Therefore I look rather to wide co-operation

than to individual munificence, or even the combined munificence of a few individuals, for the furnishing of that financial fulcrum which is indispensable to artistic leverage. Or let me modify the metaphor and say that the endowment or guarantee-fund should be to the enterprise what the spring-board and the net are to the gymnast. When once he has taken his first leap, his own sinews ought to carry him unaided through his evolutions; yet it is comfortable both to himself and his public to know that the net is there, so that a single error of eye or hand will not mean annihilation.

THE DIFFICULTY TO BE OVERCOME.

This is not the place for a discussion of ways and means, the balancing of an air-drawn budget, with imaginary incomings and hypothetical outgoings. *The money*, I am convinced, *is not the difficulty*—nor, indeed, the man or men to administer it. The difficulty is to bring the money and the brains together. The difficulty is to prove *without* money what could be done *with* money. The difficulty is, in a word, to make a beginning; for here again we encounter that profoundest of economic verities, “To him that hath shall be given.” The right beginning once made, the enterprise would roll on like a snowball,

“That which it has done but earnest of the things that it will do.”

Once bring home to the general consciousness what an Artistic Theatre might be—once make people realise that money only is needed—and money would not be needed long. We should presently have millionaires competing for the honour of adding this or that tower or wing to the Palace of Art, or of enriching their native cities with similar and perhaps affiliated institutions.

SUMMING UP: DUTIES AND FUNCTIONS OF AN
ARTISTIC THEATRE.

The reader may have observed, perhaps not without suspicion of some logical thimble-rigging, that the theatre we are discussing appears under three designations, now as an Endowed or Subsidised Theatre, again as a Repertory Theatre, and in the last paragraph as an Artistic Theatre. Let me assure him that I am blameless, in intent at any rate, of any dialectical sleight-of-hand. The three terms are, to my mind, absolutely synonymous. We cannot have an Artistic Theatre, in the large and permanent sense of the word, which shall not be a Repertory Theatre, where unbroken runs are barred; and we cannot have a Repertory Theatre without an Endowment or Subsidy to enforce its constitution and bar the runs. The three epithets represent three aspects of one and the same thing. "Artistic" points to the end, the other epithets to the conditions and means.

Let us now disregard, for a moment, the conditions and means, and simply ask ourselves what an Artistic Theatre should be and do—what is implied in the idea?

(i.) IN RELATION TO THE ENGLISH CLASSIC DRAMA.

An Artistic Theatre, in the first place, should keep alive as much of the national drama of the past as is found to have any abiding theatrical vitality. All Shakespeare is in a certain sense vital simply because it *is* Shakespeare. The fact of his transcendent genius lends interest even to his prentice-work and his failures; the glory of his great achievements is diffused over even his lesser efforts. Thus the whole of his actable plays (and the qualification excludes, I think, only *Titus Andronicus* and perhaps *Troilus and Cressida*) should be passed in review every ten years or so; while the great masterpieces should be constantly re-studied and reproduced at intervals of two, three, four, at the outside five years. Then a series of judicious experiments would presently bring together a representative acting-list of Elizabethan, Jacobean, Restoration, and Georgian plays, in which the history of the English drama—not inglorious, after all, even apart from Shakespeare—should be illustrated and brought home to us. It could then no longer be said that no modern nation has so rich a dramatic literature and so poor a theatre.

(ii.) IN RELATION TO FOREIGN CLASSICS.

An Artistic Theatre ought to have on its acting-list some representative classics of the foreign and even the antique stage. It is true that the drama is of all forms of literature the most difficult of transplantation, and that English, as compared with German at any rate, is a refractory medium for the translator. Our stage, perhaps, could never become so eclectic as that of Germany, and there would be no use in attempting to force the national genius in that direction. Still, we are not so hopelessly insular as to be unable to relish in the theatre a few representative works of Calderon and Molière, Schiller and Goethe. In dealing with the foreign as with our own classical drama, judicious experiment would soon discriminate the plays which still live from those which (for us) are dead. Heaven forbid that we should persist in haling corpses to the footlights, however great the names attached to them!

(iii.) IN RELATION TO THE MODERN DRAMA.

An Artistic Theatre should above all things foster every kind of artistic effort in contemporary drama. It should exclude nothing except pedantry, stupidity, and vulgarity. The touch of the artist may reveal itself in farce no less than in drama, in romance no less than in realism. Form, classification, matters

very little ; it is the amount of specifically dramatic talent infused into the form that gives the work its value. No form is quite hopeless. A great genius might even put fresh life into the five-act tragedy in blank verse ; though this indeed seems to touch the outer verge of the improbable. An artistic theatre should no more seek to galvanise plays that are born dead, merely because their form is ambitious, than it should seek to resurrect plays that have died of old age. Life—that quality which no one can define, but which sane and sincere perception can always recognise—should be the first and last essential to be insisted on. But in practice, no doubt, the modern plays which would for the most part come within the sphere of the theatre we are conceiving would be of a more or less serious order. Lighter pieces, farcical or idyllic, would not be excluded, if only they showed the artist's touch ; but as such plays can generally secure a hearing at the ordinary theatres, they would only in exceptional cases come in the way of this particular institution. The plays which would find in it their natural home would be those of a too high seriousness or too subtle humour to make immediate appeal to the multitude. These, as I have tried to show in the foregoing pages, are the plays which require an Artistic Theatre, and which an Artistic Theatre requires.*

* It is quite possible that, in the course of time, one stage

(iv.) IN RELATION TO ACTING.

An Artistic Theatre might or might not have a School of Acting attached to it, but would in any case, in the mere exercise of its ordinary functions, serve the purposes of such a school. Though the company would necessarily be large, the work demanded of each member of it would be very varied, and would develop talent in every direction. Young actors, instead of parroting the same half-dozen lines night after night for six months, would have an opportunity for constant study and practice, and would be stimulated by the feeling that the way to secure good parts was to do good work even in small parts.* Healthy emulation would come into play, in place of mere hopeless envy. Moreover, the minor members of the company would know that their work was carefully followed by a

would be found insufficient for the purposes of the institution. In Munich the smaller Residenz Theater stands side by side with the Hof Theater, and is, roughly speaking, devoted to modern plays, while the classic repertory holds the larger stage. Some such arrangement might ultimately commend itself in the case we are considering.

* It would be no bad plan to encourage careful understudying by giving two or three "understudy performances" (possibly matinées) of every popular play. This would be no less interesting to the regular frequenters of the theatres than to the actors themselves.

discriminating public, in whose minds they could establish, even in small parts, a cumulative reputation. Long engagements would imply comparatively moderate salaries; a certain term of service would give the right to a retiring allowance; and the life of an actor attached to the permanent company would have a security and dignity such as the present system of perpetual nomadism and engagements "for the run" places out of the question. Certain trials and drawbacks are inseparable from the theatrical calling; but in a broad-based and well-organised institution these could and would be minimised.

(v.) IN RELATION TO THE PUBLIC.

An Artistic Theatre, finally, should aim at becoming, in a certain sense, the established rendezvous of art-lovers of all classes. It should gradually, yet not *too* gradually, gather around it a public, critical but sympathetic, which should take a personal interest in its fortunes and pride in its successes. And it should offer every possible hospitality to such a public. The abonnement system, which obtains at all the great theatres of the Continent, but which the long run renders impossible, should be introduced and carefully fostered. Artistically it is most desirable, bringing the actors into a human and sympathetic relation with their audiences; and financially it is a tower of strength. Even to non-subscribers, prices

should be moderate. As it would not be necessary to squeeze the last farthing of profit out of the space at disposal, the seats in all parts of the house should be roomy, and the rows should be wide enough apart to enable people to leave and return to their places with moderate comfort to themselves and others. The tedium of the entr'actes to an audience packed into its seats like the pieces in a mosaic is at present one of the chief deterrents from theatre-going. Everything should be done to remove this drawback. Spacious corridors and comfortable crush-rooms should be provided; ladies as well as men should be enabled and encouraged to leave their places between the acts; and these intervals, devoted to fresh air and conversation, should not only cease to be deterrent, but should take a distinct place among the attractions of an evening at the play. The theatre, in short, should be a sort of art-club or intellectual hostelry, where the bodily comfort of members or guests should be in every way consulted, and their minds predisposed to a genial receptivity.

A SPECIAL BUILDING HIGHLY DESIRABLE.

These demands, it is plain, imply a special building; and a special building, though not the first requisite, is indeed of the utmost importance. "Safety and convenience apart," I wrote in 1889, "a theatre which is hidden away underground or

“sandwiched between two flaunting taverns, has a
“shamefaced and surreptitious air which wrongs the
“dignity of the drama. Many of our present play-
“houses, which make up for their exiguity of frontage
“by a meretricious effulgence of gas and electricity,
“may well suggest to the passing Puritan his favourite
“metaphor of the Gates of Gehenna. . . . A theatre
“may be, ought to be, a building of graceful eleva-
“tion and beautiful detail. The mere existence of
“a handsome, well-proportioned theatre, which no
“one could mistake for a restaurant or a bonded
“warehouse, would do a great deal to elevate the
“drama in popular estimation. Not that it should
“be ostentatious in material or flamboyant in style.
“The Théâtre-Français is one of the plainest build-
“ings in Paris. In contrast with the Opera House
“it excellently illustrates the saying of Napoleon,
“that the Comédie is the glory of France, the Opéra
“its vanity. Our theatre should be the glory of
“London, leaving to the music-hall and the gin-
“palace the vanity of gold and marble and granite
“and alabaster.” Since this was written, one or two
theatres of more or less open and more or less
ornamental frontage (notably the Garrick, Daly’s, and
the new Her Majesty’s) have been added to the
London list; but we are as far as ever from possess-
ing a truly dignified structure, standing free on all
sides, and proclaiming by its organic design the

purpose to which it is dedicated. One building indeed exists which partly answers this description. Mr. D'Oyly Carte, with truly generous and noble imagination, projected a worthy home for that form of art in which he was specially interested. The peculiarities of the site he selected forced him to rely upon decoration rather than on what I have called organic design, and he made the mistake, as I conceive it, of lavishing great sums upon costly materials. Still, he gave us a splendid and eminently commodious opera-house, and the only flaw in his scheme was the fact that the English Opera, to which the building was to be devoted, proved to be practically non-existent. English drama, on the other hand, does exist—drama of the past, drama of the present, together with living germs of the drama of the future. There is not the slightest fear that an English Play-House, as worthily conceived and executed as Mr. D'Oyly Carte's Palace of Art, would degenerate into a Palace of Varieties.

IMPORTANCE OF ARCHITECTURAL DIGNITY.

May I illustrate, by a page of autobiography, the importance of dignified architectural self-assertion in a theatre? As a boy and youth I was passionately fond of the stage, devoted all my spare cash, and more time than I ought to have spared, to theatre-going, read the great dramatists and critics, thought

about them, even wrote about them when I had the chance,—but always felt, thought, and wrote in a shame-faced, apologetic way, as though my love for the drama were something essentially puerile and vulgar. My elders, without being actively hostile to the theatre, regarded it with a more or less suspicious tolerance. But what chiefly vilified the drama in my eyes was the flaunting meanness of its places of abode—the dismal theatres of Edinburgh, situated in low parts of the town, beset by public-houses, and reeking of sawdust, orange-peel, stale gas and whisky—the garish playhouses of London, latent by day, brazen by night, like the damsels who infested the narrow pavement at their doors, and each, as in Edinburgh, entrenched in a cluster of liquor-bars. Then, at a date which I do not care to recall—but the Opera House had been opened and the Tuileries were still a heap of blackened ruins—I paid my first visit to Paris. I saw the Opera House on the evening of my arrival; but the opera was well known to be an article of luxury, quite distinct from my beloved drama, so I took no great personal interest in this gorgeous structure. Next morning I chanced to stroll along the quays of the left bank, and, looking across the Seine, I espied two large, spacious, and handsome buildings, facing each other on each side of an open space, and standing free from, and towering above, the surrounding houses. They were of

a design such as I had never seen before ; I looked at them for a minute or two, and I well remember the thrill it gave me to realise that they must be theatres. I hastily opened my map, and found my conjecture verified—they were the Châtelet and the Lyrique. Now, I can contemplate them without any spasm of admiration : they are probably commonplace buildings enough. But they were the first placidly self-confident theatres I had ever seen ; they did not shrink from the daylight, but stood there four-square, dignified and unashamed, proclaiming themselves in their very outlines homes of an honourable and honoured art. That impression I have never forgotten. I rose perceptibly in my own esteem, feeling that here, in one of the great centres of civilisation, the theme which so preoccupied my thoughts was held neither childish nor contemptible. That same evening I went to the Français, and there—not only in the beauty of the performance itself, but in the impressiveness of the vestibule, staircase and foyer, peopled with the busts and statues of the men and women who have shed glory on, and gained reflected glory from, that great institution—I was confirmed once for all in the assurance that the drama is essentially one of the noblest of the arts, and that its comparative degradation in England is perhaps the heaviest item in the price we have had to pay for civil and religious liberty.

Not until there is at least one worthy and self-asserting theatre, not only in London, but in every great provincial centre, will the drama take the place it ought to hold in popular estimation. But the first step towards acquiring such a building is no doubt to give practical demonstration of its use and necessity. I am convinced that when the institution is ripe for the building, the building will not be slow to offer itself. We shall presently have all the free libraries, picture galleries, and public baths we can reasonably require; and then will come the turn of the theatres. In the first instance, perhaps, the theatre might be conditionally presented to the institution — on the understanding, that is to say, that if, after a certain time (say ten years), the institution did not, in the opinion of a stated body of arbitrators, fulfil its artistic purposes, the building should revert to the donor, his heirs or assigns, and become once more his property. As a well-situated theatre always commands a good rent, all the donor would in this case lose would be the interest on his money during the probationary years.

RECAPITULATION.

Such forecasts, however, smack of the fairy-tale, and I am anxious to keep to solid ground. I have tried to show that any further development of the

contemporary drama is impossible under existing commercial conditions; that the classic drama, under these conditions, meets with very scant justice on the stage; that acting as well as literature suffers vitally from the long-run system; and that it requires only a little organisation, and a new spring, so to speak, in the mechanism of our theatrical life, to provide a theatre for the art-loving public, and a public for an Artistic Theatre. By slow degrees or rapid strides, if we are to advance at all, we must advance in this direction. And to admit that such a theatre is indispensable, is surely, in the same breath, to declare it inevitable.

WILLIAM ARCHER.

AUTHOR'S NOTE.

THE majority of the following articles are reprinted from the *World*, by permission of the Trustees under the will of Mr. Edmund Yates. I have also to thank the Editors of the *Daily Chronicle* and the *Westminster Gazette* for permitting me to reprint one or two articles which appeared in their columns; and my special thanks are due to Mr. Henry George Hibbert for once more completing my record with his valuable Synopsis of Playbills.

LAST PERFORMANCES OF PLAYS
STILL RUNNING AT PUBLICATION OF
"THEATRICAL WORLD OF 1895."

	Last Performance, 1896.
AN ARTIST'S MODEL (Daly's)	March 28.
GENTLEMAN JOE (Prince of Wales's) ...	March 28.
STRANGE ADVENTURES OF MISS BROWN (Terry's)	February 8.
CHILI WIDOW (Royalty)	April 27.*
CHEER, BOYS, CHEER (Olympic) ...	February 29.
TRILBY (Haymarket)	July 14.†
SQUIRE OF DAMES (Criterion)	March 21.
MRS. PONDERBURY'S PAST (Avenue) ...	February 1.‡
A TRILBY TRIFLET (Prince of Wales's)	March 27.
KITTY CLIVE (Royalty)	March 21.
ONE OF THE BEST (Adelphi)	June 6.

* "Vacation" from March 21—April 16.

† With frequent performances of *Henry IV.* intervening after May 8. See p. 141.

‡ Reproduced, Court Theatre, February 20. See p. 72.

THE THEATRICAL 'WORLD'
OF 1896.

THE
THEATRICAL "WORLD"
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1896.

I.

THE PANTOMIMES—"A WOMAN'S REASON"—"THE
LATE MR. CASTELLO"—"TOMMY ATKINS."

1st January.

BOTH PANTOMIMES are excellent this year, and one is resplendent beyond parallel. I heartily congratulate Sir Augustus Harris on the prettiest and most refined production of his reign. There is even a certain merit in the book of *Cinderella*.* I did not buy one, dreading disillusion; but it seemed to me that several of the songs were quite happily and deftly turned. Whether the poet was Mr. Cecil Raleigh, or Mr. Arthur Sturgess, or Sir Augustus himself, I cannot tell. The playbill makes mention, I see, of "Additional Songs, by Mary Watson," and "Additional Lyrics, by Joseph Watson and Constance Bache." It may have been either the additional

* Drury Lane, December 26, 1895—March 21 (138th time).

songs or the additional lyrics that fell gratefully on my ear; the distinction, I grieve to own, escapes me. It was pleasant, in any case, to find that the improved versification of the burlesque stage was beginning to make its way even into Drury Lane pantomime. The music-hall element, again, was much less aggressive than it was wont to be some four or five years ago. It would perhaps be stretching a point to call Mr. Herbert Campbell and Mr. Dan Leno (the Baron and Baroness) positively refined; but their vulgarity was a great deal less sordid and ugly than it used to be. Miss Ada Blanche made a very pleasant Prince, and Miss Isa Bowman a graceful Cinderella. As for the spectacle, it is not only indescribably gorgeous, but, in two scenes at any rate, exceedingly beautiful. Dazzling rather than beautiful, was the epithet suggested by the tableau of "Fairyland," with its wilderness of electric lamps, its rotating electric wheel in the background, and in the foreground Cinderella's automotor carriage encrusted with incandescent jewels. But beautiful rather than merely dazzling was the word to apply to the magnificent Ballroom scene; while the so-called "Grand Transformation Scene" (not a transformation scene at all, but a procession and ballet) was, to my thinking, by far the most exquisite spectacle, in its richness of design and delicacy of colour, we have yet seen on the Drury Lane stage. The aërial flights of the

Grigolati Troupe, if they did not add much to the artistic charm of the scene, were in themselves ingenious and graceful, and will certainly enrapture the children.

Mr. Oscar Barrett's *Robinson Crusoe*,* at the Lyceum, is a very agreeable mixture of brilliant spectacle and harmless fooling. Defoe having unaccountably omitted to "work in the female interest," Mr. Horace Lennard has repaired the oversight by giving Crusoe a sweetheart, and furthermore endowing his mother with a spirit of adventure somewhat foreign to her character as depicted in the original text. The savages, too, of the anti-Friday faction are discovered to have had a monarch named Hullabaloo, not only anthropophagous but polygamous in his habits, whose court was a miracle of barbaric splendour. The scene of his marriage with Crusoe's sweetheart (duly interrupted, of course) is a quaint and delightful spectacle, full of those marvellous costumes and weapons which charm the childish imagination. The whole show is bright, varied, animated. Miss Alice Brookes makes a sprightly if somewhat insignificant Crusoe, Miss Grace Lane a sympathetic Polly, and little Miss Geraldine Somerset, as the Spirit of Adventure, plays to perfection her too short part. Mr. Victor Stevens as Mrs. Crusoe is inexhaustibly and inoffensively funny; and Mr. Fred

* December 26, 1895—February 22.

Emney, as Will Atkins, makes a charmingly melodramatic smuggler and buccaneer. Mr. Charles Lauri and Mr. Fred Storey, a pair of marvellously agile and at the same time humorous pantomimists, play Friday and King Hullabaloo; and Mr. Lauri reappears as the clown in the brief but amusing harlequinade.

It has always puzzled me to understand why the Israelites, who form so large and influential a section of our playgoing public, submit so tamely to the wanton insults to which their race is currently subjected at the hands of playwrights and low comedians. One can count on one's fingers the decent and dignified Jews of the modern drama, whereas the monsters of cruelty and crime and the contemptible comic villains defy enumeration. In the new play at the Shaftesbury,* however, by Messrs. C. H. Brookfield and F. C. Philips, the Chosen People have their revenge. Not in words—oh no! They are abused throughout; but that is only to make their miraculous virtues shine the more resplendent. Never was there a play in which the sheep and the goats were more clearly marked off from each other. Out of the eight leading characters, two—the Jews—are entirely and ineffably angelic, while the remaining six—Gentiles all—are snobs, parasites, hypocrites, libertines, numskulls: everything, in short, that is

* *A Woman's Reason*, December 27, 1895—March 14.

utterly base and despicable. It is true that the heroine has ultimately the grace to see the error of her ways. Disciplined by the Divorce Court, she grovels penitent at her husband's feet, and is taken by the seraphic Stephen to his manly and magnanimous bosom. This contrition of Nina's is the sole redeeming trait allowed to the Gentiles, while Stephen and Leah never once emerge from their aureoles of utter nobility, delicacy, and generosity. The play might be called *Frou-frou à la mode Juive*—Meilhac and Halévy's drama adapted to the glorification of Judaism and the humiliation of Christianity. The Jews of old, according to Matthew Arnold, possessed a "genius for righteousness"; it certainly survives in Mr. Stephen D'Acosta.

Let me not be understood to complain, from the race point of view, of any unfairness in the apportionment of virtue and vice between Semite and Saxon. No one doubts that there are good Jews and bad Gentiles, or contests the dramatists' right to do justice, and perhaps a little more than justice, to a race which, from Marlowe onwards, has met with scant appreciation on the English stage. My objection to the play is, not its Judaism, but its idealism. Stephen and Leah are not characteristically Jews at all; they are not human beings; they are simply ideal personages, invented to play the sympathetic parts in a satire on snobbery. These violent character-

contrasts—two seraphs moving among a herd of swine—belong in reality to a childish stage of artistic development, and come in appropriately at pantomime season. Nina is the only real character-study in the play, and even she is superficial and obvious enough; the rest are either grotesque or super-human.

At the same time, the piece is well written, and not at all uninteresting. The second act, indeed, would be excellent work in its kind, if it were not discounted by its close resemblance to the second and third acts of *Frou-frou*. I do not mean that the authors have imitated Meilhac and Halévy. They may very likely have conceived and constructed their act before the resemblance occurred to them. But the fact remains that, as scene follows scene, the sense of familiarity, of having gone through it all before, grows upon us, and takes the edge off our interest. The scenes in which little Algie is concerned, however, have no real counterpart in *Frou-frou*, and, being sympathetically written and delightfully played by Master Stewart Dawson, produce a great effect. Both the first and the second act abound in really smart and well-turned cynicisms, and, simply as grotesques, Lord Bletchley (Mr. Brookfield), the Rev. Cosmo Pretious (Mr. Kemble), and Agatha Pretious (Miss Maud Millett) are very amusing. In the third act, when the flow of witticisms ceased, I confess that my

enjoyment ceased with it. It needs a certain depth and solidity of character to render discussions of conduct interesting, and here the characters were ideal on the one hand, conventional on the other. In spite of his vindication, in the first act, of the sanguinary severities of the Mosaic law, we knew that the saintly Stephen was bound to forgive his erring spouse, and we were rather impatient of the trivial accidents which intervened to retard that consummation. Mrs. Beerbohm Tree, a little nervous and forced in the first act, was admirable in the second and third; and Mr. Lewis Waller was throughout the ideal of his ideal personage. Indeed, I could not but think him *too* ideal. Surely the authors must have imagined Stephen D'Acosta with some external inferiority of appearance or manner to account for Nina's shrinking from him. Mr. Coghlan played the phlegmatic Lothario, Captain Crozier, with excessive deliberation, but not ineffectively; and Miss Florence West was good as Leah. The play is entitled *A Woman's Reason*—why? I ask myself in vain.

Mr. Sydney Grundy's three-act farce, *The Late Mr. Castello*,* is one of those pieces which elude criticism. If it amuses you, so much the better; if it bores you, it cannot be helped. It is a jest whose prosperity lies entirely in the ear that hears it, and it prospered mightily in the ears of the first-night audience, who

* December 28, 1895—February 20.

laughed and applauded without stint. My laughing apparatus was doubtless out of order, for, with the best will in the world, I could scarcely raise a smile. There was some clever dialogue during the first ten minutes, but somehow the incessant translation of life into terms of the Stock Exchange presently began to pall. As for the action, it bewildered without interesting me. It seemed to represent (even in caricature) nothing that one had ever seen or cared to imagine. Why Mr. Grundy should have been at the trouble of imagining it I cannot conceive. Probably he intended to represent in Mrs. Castello a new species of the genus coquette; but it seems to me he has only succeeded in drawing a very common variety in very crude colours. The characters, as a whole, are purely phantasmal, like Mr. Bernard Shaw's personages, but without Mr. Shaw's humour and flashes of insight. In brief, to my great regret, I could not relish the farce at all; but the audience relished it hugely, and no doubt they were right. It was capitably played by Miss Winifred Emery, Miss Rose Leclercq, Miss Esmé Beringer, Mr. Cyril Maude, and Mr. J. G. Grahame. I cannot help fancying that Mr. Grundy must have intended something in the part of Captain Trefusis that Mr. Leonard Boyne did not quite bring out; but this is mere conjecture.

Messrs. Shirley and Landeck's play, *Tommy Atkins*,*

* December 23—30, 1895.

at the Duke of York's Theatre, is an outrageous East-end melodrama beside which the ordinary Adelphi drama seems a work of high literary distinction. I sat out two preposterous acts, not unamusing in their very extravagance, and then could endure no more. The programme promised some stirring military episodes in the last act, which may very likely be effective in their kind, for the piece is liberally mounted. Mr. Charles Cartwright, Mr. Edward O'Neill, and Miss Gertrude Kingston play the hero, villain, and heroine.

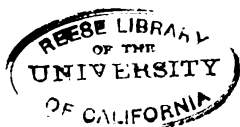
II.

"THE SIGN OF THE CROSS"—"ALL ABROAD."

8th January.

No, my dear Mr. Wilson Barrett, I am not going to play up to you by criticising, discussing, or even ridiculing *The Sign of the Cross*.^{*} It lies quite outside my province. The art critic does not chronicle the latest addition to Madame Tussaud's Chamber of Horrors; the musical critic takes no cognisance of a Salvationist orgie: why should the dramatic critic devote a moment's thought to a combination of the

⁶
* Lyric Theatre, January 4—30, 1891 (with some performances of *The Mauxman* interposed late in the run).



penny dreadful with the Sunday-school picture-book? My business is with the drama as a form of art, and art has nothing to say to this series of tawdry tableaux, with their crude appeal to the shallowest sentiments and lowest instincts of the mob. The thing is an astute and apparently successful attempt to make capital out of that half-hearted hankering after the stage which has of late become an almost inseparable characteristic of your liberal-minded cleric. Many managers have contrived to get local and temporary advertisement out of the vanity and inexperience of some would-be broad-churchman, who has thought himself greatly daring in taking his white choker to the theatre; but it has been reserved for Mr. Wilson Barrett to work the oracle on a grand, systematic, international scale. Having no reasonable standards of comparison, the simple-minded padres, like children at their first pantomime, do not recognise the pretentious puerility, the hideous vulgarity of the whole thing, and set to work dutifully to beat the "pulpit, drum ecclesiastick" at the door of Mr. Barrett's booth. A Salvationist pantomime—that defines the show. There ought really to be a harlequinade, in which Marcus Superbus, transformed into the Clown, should throw dust in the eyes of the clergyman, who would of course, for the nonce, replace the policeman of tradition. I don't know that I am constitutionally apt to overrate the popular

intelligence, but certainly I was taken aback by the frenzied enthusiasm with which the pit and gallery received this farrago of crudities and ineptitudes. At first I doubted the genuineness of the demonstrations, and of course I do not vouch for it even now. But I studied pretty closely the two front rows of the pit, which appeared to be filled, not only with paying playgoers, but with people of by no means the lowest or stupidest class. I have at this moment a vision of a woman's face, rather refined and pleasing in repose, converted into one cavernous mouth, like that of the lion (poor thing!) who was supposed to be devouring Mr. Wilson Barrett behind the scenes, as she vociferated her rapture at the close of the performance. It was a depressing spectacle. Miss Maud Jeffries, who played the heroine, has a beautiful face and a tall and graceful figure. She reminded me strongly of Miss Mary Anderson. Of her powers as an actress I could form no estimate.

The musical farce *All Abroad** has been revived at the Court Theatre with an entirely new cast. It is neither better nor worse than it was at the Criterion, and it certainly amused the first-night audience. Mr. Willie Edouin and Mr. Fred Kaye play the grotesque solicitors; Mr. David James replaces Mr. De Lange as the champagne-growing Baron, not to the advantage of the part; Mr. Sugden is the music-hall

* January 2—23.

manager, and Mr. Templer Saxe the sailor. Miss Grace Palotta plays Madame Montesquieu pleasantly enough, and Miss May Edouin throws herself into the part of Connie with real spirit and enjoyment.

III.

"THE PRISONER OF ZENDA."

15th January.

MR. EDWARD ROSE will stand recorded in the theatrical annals of our time as the Dauntless Dramatiser. The more hopeless a novel appears for theatrical purposes, the more irresistibly does it fascinate Mr. Rose's adventurous spirit. "L'impossible me tente," says Césarine in *La Femme de Claude*; and, without suggesting any further analogy between Mr. Rose and that "colère de Dieu," I cannot help thinking that they have in common this splendid audacity. Nothing could well have seemed less promising for the stage than *Vice Versâ*, but it had no terrors for Mr. Rose. He not only dramatised it, but played the leading part, with considerable success, if I remember rightly. It would not in the least surprise me to learn that he has up his sleeve an adaptation of *The Heavenly Twins*. In the meantime, he has transferred to the stage Mr. Anthony Hope's *Prisoner*

of *Zenda*,* without losing anything of the spirit of the romance. Not foreseeing the possibility of dramatisation, I had neglected the precaution I took in the case of *Trilby*—that of not reading the novel. } (Perhaps the fact that Mr. Hope's book was in one volume, Mr. Du Maurier's in three, may have had something to do with the matter; but it is mere cynicism to seek out grovelling motives for conduct which admits of an ideal interpretation.) The result is that I cannot say with confidence whether Mr. Rose has made the action absolutely clear to those who have not read the book; but my impression is that he has, if anything, clarified it. Much as I admired the spirit and movement of the romance, I confess that the internal arrangements of the Castle of Zenda bewildered me not a little. I wanted a ground-plan and elevation of that fortalice. The moat especially baffled my mental vision, and the function of the device known as Jacob's Ladder remained a mystery to me. Mr. Rose has removed the moat, and though Jacob's Ladder remains, no stress is laid upon it. To account for the resemblance between the two Rudolfs, Mr. Rose has introduced a picturesque prologue, taking us back 150 years, and showing us the culmination of the intrigue between Prince Rudolf of Ruritania and

* St. James's, January 7—July 18. Run resumed October 20—November 28.

Amelia, Countess of Rassendyll. It is a capital piece of cloak-and-sword drama, and strikes the keynote of the sequel. Cloak-and-sword drama, indeed, is a term that applies quite literally to the whole play. We must not, of course, look for any great subtlety of character or depth of emotion; but the swords flash bravely, the cloaks are draped with an air, and we are interested and amused. The substitution of the English for the Ruritanian Rudolf is cleverly managed, and the curtain falls on the first act just at the right moment. The Coronation Scene of the second act is brilliant and effective. I think, perhaps, we might have been made to take a little more seriously the sentimental passages between Rudolf and the Princess Flavia. One felt that there was either too much or too little of them. In the third act especially, after the Princess has learnt the truth about her lover, it seemed that a moment or two of bewilderment, perhaps even a flash of resentment, before she fully realised his motives, would have lent reality to the thing. As it was, the scenes were long enough to—well, to make us conscious of their length—and yet too summary to get at our emotions. In Mr. Rose's place, too, I should have been inclined to concentrate the villainy of the play more in the person of Duke Michael, especially with such a fine actor as Mr. Herbert Waring to play the part. Hentzau and Detchard cannot possibly be made as

effective in the play as in the romance, and the attempt to preserve their prominence merely throws the arch-villain into the background, and makes his part a feeble one. It strikes me, by the way, that the whole gang of villains, whether in book or play, are not as "bloody, bold and resolute" as they might be. The dungeon business is a dangerous half-measure. It would have been much safer for Duke Michael, the moment he had learnt of the substitution, to have put a bullet through the King's head, left his body to be found in the forest, and then accused Sapt and Fritz von Tarlenheim of having assassinated the King in order to place this impostor, their tool, upon the throne. No doubt this course would have had its risks, but it would have put Rassendyll, Sapt, and Fritz in an uncommonly awkward predicament. But that, of course, would have been another story.

One great advantage of this class of play is that it does not overtax the talent of the actors. Every one is as good as need be, and some a little better. Mr. Alexander played his three parts with ease, spirit, humour, and feeling. It is rather a pity, for his sake, that the Black Elphbergs were not the rightful kings, and the Red Elphbergs the villains. Miss Millard, on the other hand, looked charming in her ruddy locks, and played with all needful grace and sincerity. Mr. Herbert Waring had very little to do as Black

Michael, but he did it well; and Miss Lily Hanbury was good as Madame de Mauban. Nothing could have been better than Mr. W. H. Vernon's Bismarckian embodiment of Colonel Sapt, and Mr. George Bancroft's sketch of the English Ambassador was clever, if a trifle overdone. As the Countess of Rassendyll, in the Prologue, Miss Mabel Hackney showed real promise in a very trying part. Nothing is more difficult than to "strike twelve at once"—to assume a character of which the audience knows practically nothing, and plunge straight into a scene of high emotion which lasts only three or four minutes in all. Miss Hackney was naturally nervous, but played with grace and feeling, and acquitted herself more than creditably.

IV.

"MICHAEL AND HIS LOST ANGEL."

22nd January.

IN *Michael and his Lost Angel** Mr. Henry Arthur Jones has enriched, not our theatre only, but our literature, with a beautiful love-story. We are not very strong in love-stories of native growth. As a race, we are ashamed of passion; it consists not either with our Pauline morality or our ancestral

* Lyceum, January 15—25.

instinct of sturdy self-sufficiency. In literature we get round it as much as possible, either ignoring it or taking it for granted. It is true that the great love-story of the world is told for all time in the English tongue; but the legend of *Romeo and Juliet* is Italian, or rather, if we trace it far enough back, an Indo-European myth, and Shakespeare re-created it, not out of the English elements in his character, but out of the universality of his genius. He told the immortal love-story in virtue of the same predestination (for so it must almost appear) which assigned to him the telling of the world's great jealousy-story, ambition-story, scepticism-story, ingratitude-story. For the rest, our literature abounds in social and moral studies into which love enters as an important, and even a determining, factor; but there are very few stories which exist for the sake of portraying and glorifying the emotion in and for itself, as a thing of beauty and of terror. Our classic novelists, for the most part, treated love quite conventionally, Thackeray even confessing himself afraid to touch it. Mr. Meredith has given us matchless analyses of sentiment, and Mr. Hardy has sternly put passion in its place among the forces of nature. But where shall we look, in modern fiction or drama, for a large, simple, lyrical love-story, neither philosophic, nor analytic, nor moral, but celebrating, with the directness of a ballad or folk-tale, the potency for life or

death of the divine illusion? I can think of nothing which so nearly fulfils this definition as Mr. Jones's finely-inspired romance. It is by far—oh, very far!—the best thing he has done. There are passages in it (an entire act, indeed) in which he seems to me to lose grip of his theme. But the play, as a whole, is conceived with a depth of feeling and written with a delicacy of style which he has not hitherto approached.

Its formula is that of all the great love-stories since the world began—two lovers and an obstacle. The Hellespont parted Hero from Leander; a vendetta interposed between Romeo and Juliet; an ascetic ideal, crystallised in a vow, sunders Michael Feversham from Audrie Lesden. Thus the problem is truly modern and fundamental. External barriers are now of small account. The dramatic conflicts which permanently interest us are those which have their origin and being in the soul. Michael's soul has been entirely possessed, from childhood upwards, by a spiritualistic interpretation of life, and an idealistic morality which ignores the intricacy of ethical problems, and shrinks with loathing from casuistry and compromise. He is honest, high-minded, unselfish: proud, without arrogance, of his priestly office, and not without a modest complacency in his exercise of it. He has gone through a mild romance in his boyhood, but, since coming to man's estate, has

found his unofficial vow, or resolution, of celibacy not only essential to the dignity of his calling, but exceedingly easy to keep. It is, indeed, the shining flawlessness of his spiritual armour that tempts Mrs. Lesden to try conclusions with him. The character of Audrie Lesden has been called obscure ; to me it appears transpicuous. Her nature, her habits of thought, are directly opposed to Michael's. She is instinctively Pagan as he is instinctively Christian. She does not, like Agnes Ebbsmith, call herself or think herself an agnostic ; but, practically, she believes in nothing "from the roof upwards." The pageant of existence amuses her or bores her as the case may be ; but she cannot conceive it protracted to a formless and colourless infinity. The ideas which are all-in-all to Michael—the soul and its destinies, sin and repentance, heaven and hell—have no reality, no meaning for her. She plays with and mocks at them. They interest her dramatically, as motives in the human comedy ; but they do not affect her personally, save by way of make-believe. Quite foreign to her nature is the demand for a spiritual explanation of her being or sanction for her acts. The gift of worldliness—that is, of taking the world as she finds it—is innate in her, as in Michael the instinct of other-worldliness. They meet, and his priestly impassivity is a challenge to the coquetry of her nature. In a spirit of pure mischief, she sets

herself to encroach on his aloofness and to trouble his calm. At first, it is mainly an intellectual sport. It amuses her, without impugning his doctrines, to hold them up to him in the mirror of an airy scepticism. She declines to take seriously his sacerdotal function, and, without ever abandoning the vantage-ground of her sex, or committing herself to any definite theoretic position, she harasses him with little darts of satire, all the more galling because neither his nature nor his profession allows him to retort in kind. But there is nothing more dangerous for a woman than to make a man ridiculous and find that, in her heart, she cannot laugh at him. Michael's native dignity and ardent sincerity are unimpaired by her attacks—and she knows it. Admiration takes the place of malice, and her coquetry, baffled, makes room for a deeper emotion. An adventure on which she had embarked in mere idleness has absorbed her whole being, and she feels she must stake her life upon it. Then it is that, as she puts it afterwards, she sells his soul and her own to the devil—and at this point the play opens.

In the first act she pursues her old tactics, jesting with the phraseology of his profession, and braving, with the petulance of a spoilt child, the cold disapproval of his attitude. But she is on the watch for a weak spot in his defences, and she finds it in the very spirituality of his creed. She has seen him in

an act of adoration before the "good angel" of his life, symbolised in his mother's picture; and, by threatening to profane with her unhallowed touch this shrine of his piety, she lures him out of his stronghold of reserve. Then fate, as it sometimes will, plays into her hands. He expresses with warmth his sense of the living presence of his mother's spirit, and, in spite of herself, she is genuinely awed by the idea, brought home to her imagination by the ardour of his faith. The moment her imagination is seriously touched, they are on common ground. It is not in mere coquetry, but in a far more dangerous semi-sincerity, that she says, "You told me just now that I was playing with sacred things. I am, or I was until you spoke about *her*. Don't let me play with your soul." And thus, with a touch of irony which I take leave to think poetic and profound, Michael's "good" angel is made to open the door to his "bad" angel:

"Galeotto fu il quadro e chi lo pinse."

The second act, unquestionably the best of the five, is a beautiful page of romance. Four months have passed, and the two are in the toils of an equal passion. They have clung to the outward form of a contest of faith with scepticism, gravity with levity: not otherwise may Abelard and Eloisa have canvassed realism and nominalism, while yet they feared to

talk of love. No doubt he has genuinely longed to save her soul; but she is as far as ever from feeling that she has a soul to be saved. Her paganism is intact; but her love is so real that she has come to feel a sort of intermittent sympathy with his spirituality, and there are times when she sincerely resolves to aid him on the path of renunciation. But she must have confession first; she must know that she has brought him to the point of imperilling his soul for her; that moment of triumph is not to be forgone. He has taken flight to his hermitage on St. Decuman's island, and there she seeks him out. The scene which ensues is one of true poetic quality, a passage of swift and cunning sword-play in the duel of sex. It works up to the inevitable avowal, followed by the no less natural and inevitable effort after renunciation. But not in vain has she sold their souls to the devil. A series of chances, quite probable and unstrained, has cut off her retreat from the island; and he has sent away his own boat lest he should be tempted to go to her. "No boat will come to-night!" says Michael—they are cut off from all the world. Fate, or some other ironic divinity, has poured for them the *Liebestrank* of Tristan and Isolde.

There are phrases in these two acts that one regrets, but I have neither the space nor the will to discuss them. It is a much more essential and

a much pleasanter duty to thank Mr. Jones for a piece of true dramatic poetry, a process of strong emotion vividly, forcibly, and imaginatively set forth. The third act pleases me less. Mr. Jones, I think, baulks us of the scene we naturally expect, and shunts the action into a siding. What is the scene we naturally expect? Surely a set and strenuous effort on Audrie's part to break down in theory the ascetic ideal which has collapsed in practice, and to drag her lover forth from what she regards as the prison-house of a superstition. That she should fail is natural and probable enough; he is in reality as "instinctive" as she, and the instinct of expiative self-torture is not to be broken down in an hour, nor perhaps in a lifetime; but at least she should make the attempt. As a matter of fact, she is passive, paralysed. The reappearance of her husband, which makes no essential difference to her, since she never believed him dead, seems to crush her as utterly as it does Michael. I think, too, that Mr. Jones has overdone his hero's spirituality in making him think only of the new light in which he sees his transgression, and feel (it would seem) no pang of earthly jealousy on learning that another man has a claim, however problematical, upon the woman he loves. The truth is, Mr. Jones has gone astray after the effects to be got out of Andrew Gibbard's discovery of Michael's fall. The scenes, indeed, are

not in themselves ineffective ; but they do not really belong to the theme, since it certainly requires no embodied conscience, like the gimlet-eyed Andrew, to goad such a man as Michael to confession.

In the last two acts the story resumes its due course, and works itself out poetically, and not unnaturally. Michael finds a life of hypocrisy impossible, and tries to expel the fever from his blood, and reconcile himself with Heaven and his conscience, by an act of public self-abasement. But the love-philtre does not yield even to so drastic an antidote. The memory of St. Decuman's Isle is the one reality of life to him ; all else—religion, nature, scholarship—is tediously phantasmal. For Audrie, on the other hand, her former life, never very satisfying, has utterly lost its savour. She has no spirit of resistance, no will to live ; and malaria finds her an easy victim. They meet at the last and talk of the sunrise over the sea ; and, when she is dead, Michael cries to the priest who is standing by : "I give my life, my will, my soul to you ! Do what you please with me ! I'll believe all, do all, suffer all—only—only persuade me that I shall meet her again !" It may be very childish, but I cannot disabuse my mind of the notion that this is a singularly beautiful romance of love and fate.

And now I perceive that I have said nothing at all of the "daring" and "audacious" and "startling"

church-scene of the fourth act. The truth is, it did not startle me at all; it left me, like the philosophic turkey of Marjorie Fleming's poem, "more than usual calm." It was a sumptuous spectacle—too sumptuous to be really dramatic. The effect of Michael's confession would have been much stronger had it taken place amid less gorgeous surroundings and before a congregation whom we could really feel to be his own flock, not the well-dressed crowd of an ecclesiastical field-day. But, as a piece of pageantry, the thing was not unimpressive. Mr. Forbes Robertson played Michael admirably, though perhaps, especially in the fourth act, a little too monotonously. Miss Marion Terry was perfect in the first act, and, indeed, in the lighter scenes throughout. At some points, as the play proceeded, she did not seem to strike quite the right note of imagination and passion; but her death-scene was genuinely pathetic. Mr. Mackintosh, as Andrew Gibbard, was a trifle stagey at first, but, on the whole, quiet and impressive; and Miss Sarah Brooke was good as his daughter.

V.

"THE FOOL OF THE FAMILY."

5th February.

To say that *The Fool of the Family* is Augier's *L'Aventurière* with a flavouring of *Still Waters Run Deep* is to state the truth and yet to convey a false impression. The mere mention of these pieces carries the mind into a region, not perhaps of great literature, but at least of coherence and competence, which Mr. Fergus Hume's play at the Duke of York's Theatre* never for a moment approaches. The ways of managers, or rather of managements, are inscrutable. We are told of the dearth of good plays, and truly I cannot aver that they grow on the hedges; but there are certainly scores and hundreds of better plays than this going the rounds from stage-door to stage-door. It must be admitted that *The Fool of the Family* was received almost without protest and with a good deal of applause. It must also be admitted that it is not very much worse than several other plays which have lately had some show of success. But first-night auguries, never to be implicitly relied on, are absolutely negligible in cases like this; and though successes of imbecility have indeed been alarmingly

* January 30—February 1.

common of late, it may generally be noticed that such victories prove, in the long run, little better than protracted defeats.

The "fool of the family" is of course intended to be not such a fool as he looks; but, as a matter of fact, he could not possibly look a greater fool than he is. Entrusted with £200 by a wealthy uncle, Peter (why are fools always called either Simon or Peter?) goes to London, and gets drugged and robbed in a Bayswater boarding-house. Then he learns, "no matter how," as he airily remarks—but if anything matters in such a play, it *does* matter how—that the man and woman who robbed him are going to make a try for £30,000 worth of diamonds which his uncle keeps in the family strong-room. He comes down to his uncle's place to save the diamonds, and finds that the robbers, now passing as father and daughter (they are in reality husband and wife), have wormed themselves into the old gentleman's confidence, and are constant guests at his house. It would be quite easy for Peter to tear off the disguise of the male scoundrel, and hand the pair over to the police; but he prefers, as he himself tells us, to baffle them single-handed, and so regain his uncle's esteem by proving himself no fool. Well and good; we are bound to accept the postulate on which the play is built. But how does Peter set about his task? You would imagine that his mere appearance on the scene would be sufficient

to frighten the robbers away; but somehow or other they think that Peter does not recognise them, and are not greatly disturbed by his arrival. This is, of course, an inconceivably happy chance for Peter, who would have no opportunity for posing as a Sherlock Holmes if they simply decamped. His obvious course would be to lull them, by every means in his power, still deeper into their false security. But this view of the matter does not occur to him. On the contrary, he does all he possibly can to "queer his pitch." He neglects no opportunity of delivering sly digs at the thieves, showing that he knows them perfectly well, and putting them on their guard. At one point he even drops into verse in a friendly way, and allegorises the situation in a fable. Fortunately, the thieves are more idiotic than he. They begin by throwing off their disguise under the very windows of the house, and discussing their nefarious plots in a place where they are quite certain to be overheard; and they end by attempting the burglary at a moment when they cannot possibly doubt that Peter will be on the watch. In a word, the whole action lacks not only ingenuity but common sense. Personally, I have a great liking for a good detective story, whether on the stage or off; but this is one of the most helpless efforts of its class I ever came across. The dialogue is quite on a level with the construction, and the comic relief, supplied by the inevitable amorous old

maid, is repulsive in idea, though the comparative tact with which Miss Marie Lyons handled the character made it less nauseous than it sometimes is.

Mr. Charles Cartwright played "the fool of the family" with a stolid monotony which was to me depressing. Such parts are surely not in his line. Mr. H. B. Irving and Miss Gertrude Kingston, as the idiot house-breakers, were good enough for all practical purposes; but there is really nothing to be done with such characters. Mr. Pateman was passable as Peter's uncle, and Miss Lena Ashwell was charming as his sweetheart.

VI.

"HENRY IV." IN MANCHESTER.

12th February.

A SPASM of patriotism (not to speak it profanely) is at present agitating the empire on which the sun never sets. The "weary Titan" is bracing herself up, and squaring her shoulders under the load

"Almost not to be borne
Of the too vast orb of her fate."

For my part, I do not envy the man who dwells in spirit on so high a hill-top that he can witness this

spectacle unmoved, or moved only to laughter. His sense of history and his sense of drama are alike defective. Look at it how we may, and from whatever aloofness, England has played a notable part on the stage of the world; and even an astral intelligence might reasonably feel a certain interest in speculating how she is like to figure in the coming act. Nay more, it is conceivable that such an intelligence, weighing the potentialities for good and evil of the half-dozen leading characters in the play, might see reason to centre its sympathies on England, and to hope that she may carry on into the future the traditions of a past which has not, in the main, been either shameful or maleficent. Ebullitions of national sentiment, then, manifestations of our historic self-consciousness, are not in themselves to be pooh-poohed; but it must be admitted that the way in which the theatre responds to this natural and not unhealthy instinct is pitiable enough. The British Lion swaggers on the metropolitan stage in the guise of the *lion comique*. Some screeds of blatant doggerel, official and amateur, said or sung amid the tawdry surroundings of a variety show—a few inept gags shouted to the gallery by the heroes and buffoons of melodrama and pantomime—these are the nobly adequate utterances accorded by the public stage to England's pride in her past and hope for her future. Now it so happens that one advantage which

England undeniably possesses over every other nation in the world lies precisely in the fact that the greatest of dramatists has given superb expression to her historic self-consciousness. Other nations may have had an equally glorious, picturesque, and stirring past; but what other nation has had a Shakespeare to sing it? Our national epic has been cast in vivid and vital dramatic form by the poet whose very name is the summit of our national glories; and behold! we let this incomparable heirloom moulder half-forgotten on the shelf. Even at a crisis like the present, when the feeling of the moment would give it positive actuality, and the pulse of the nation would thrill to it as to a trumpet-blast, we have no means of making our epic drama live upon the stage. At half-a-dozen theatres in Germany they could in three weeks' time mount a revival of the whole Shakespearian cycle from *King John* to *Henry VIII.*; there is not a single theatre in London, in England, in the English-speaking world, where such an enterprise could possibly be attempted. Is it not time we set about re-conquering Shakespeare from the Germans? It would not cost us much—not so much, in the long run, as a single torpedo-destroyer.

This outburst of literary jingoism is inspired by the really intense pleasure which I received from a performance of the first part of *Henry IV.* at the Queen's Theatre, Manchester, on Saturday evening. I went

to see it at the invitation of Mr. Charles Hughes, director of the Manchester branch of the Independent Theatre, who justly assured me that I would find it well worth the journey ; but the Independent Theatre is in no way concerned in the production. It is the enterprise of Mr. Louis Calvert, whose father did so much for the poetic drama in Manchester twenty years ago. Mr. Calvert has mounted the play, modestly but quite adequately, at a theatre where the prices range from half-a-crown to threepence ; he has got together a company which knows what verse is and loves its rhythm and its resonance ; he has put some money into the undertaking, but has been much more lavish of thought and care ; and he has achieved a success in Manchester which I trust will accompany him on the tour he projects. The theatre on Saturday night was densely crowded ; the pit and gallery reminded me of Drury Lane on Boxing Night ; and the play was followed with rapt attention and evident delight. And what a play it is ! How bracing, how stimulant, how full of life and movement and colour and human nature ! Even if Falstaff were eliminated, the characters of the King, the Prince, Hotspur, and Glendower would make it no mere stilted chronicle-play, but instinct with racy humanity ; and then in Falstaff we have, by the consent of all the world, the greatest humorous creation in dramatic literature. Is it not incredible

that in twenty years' sedulous theatre-going in the city where Shakespeare lived and wrote, I should have had no single opportunity of seeing on the stage this national masterpiece, this spirit-stirring, side-splitting, essentially popular play, and should now have to travel two hundred miles in order fully to realise its great and vital qualities? The performance was rough and unpolished in many ways, but it had the supreme merit, so often lacking in our gorgeously upholstered Shakespearian solemnities at the Lyceum and elsewhere, of being thoroughly and intensely alive. The actors understood and enjoyed their work, and communicated their enjoyment to the audience. Mr. Calvert, I rather fancy, had made a mistake in casting himself for Falstaff. It is true that a bad cold forced him to spare his voice—a medical certificate to that effect was posted in the lobby—but, even making all possible allowance for this disadvantage, I should doubt whether Mr. Calvert is the born comedian whom the character requires. His performance was an intelligent recitation rather than an incarnation; it was Shakespeare rather than his interpreter who kept the audience in a roar.

Mr. S. A. Cookson made a really admirable Henry IV. In appearance and bearing he was all that could be desired, and he spoke his lines with a perfect sense of both their metrical and their dramatic value. Mr. Charles Vane, as Prince Hal, though only passable in

the other scenes, played well up to Mr. Cookson in the great scene between father and son, which went with really thrilling effect. Mr. W. Mollison was a spirited and intelligent, if not an ideal, Hotspur; Mr. John S. Haydon, as the Earl of Worcester, proved himself a sound and valuable actor of the old school; and Mr. J. W. Evelyn was a capital Glendower. The merit of the production, however, did not lie so much in individual performances as in the life and vigour of the whole. I do not deny, of course, that if it were to be bodily transplanted to the Lyceum, it would seem, in externals, crude and provincial enough; but there was intelligence and enthusiasm in every detail of it, and a worthier, a more truly artistic and patriotic entertainment, could not possibly have been devised with the limited resources at command. The only matter on which more care might have been expended was verbal accuracy in the delivery of the text; but even in this respect Mr. Calvert's company was far ahead of Mr. Daly's. The production proved, what I have always maintained, that it does not need £10,000, nor a tenth part of that sum, to make a play of Shakespeare's live on the stage. How long must London wait for a manager who shall have the enterprise and intelligence to mount ten plays (not by Shakespeare alone) with the sum that is now lavished, often to no artistic purpose, upon a single sumptuous revival?

VII.

"THE NEW BARMAID"—"JEDBURY JUNIOR"—
"ON 'CHANGE."

19th February.

THE purveyors of musical farce are working steadily through the list of female occupations, and must, at this rate, presently exhaust it. *The Gaiety Girl*, that most exquisite and fascinating incarnation of the Eternal Feminine, headed the procession. Then came *The Lady Slavey*, *The Shop Girl*, *The Artist's Model*. Now it is *The New Barmaid* who exerts her witcheries upon us; and in due course, no doubt, we shall fall under the spell of *The Little French Milliner*, *The Pretty Type-writer*, *The Pet of the Post Office*, *The Belle of the A.B.C.*, and who knows how many more? One can also foresee incursions into the Peerage, resulting in a chromatic scale of heroines, from *The Dear Duchess* downwards; while *The Missouri Millionairess* could not fail to be extremely attractive. It is hard to recall one's fancy from this Dream of Fair Women, "peopling the hollow dark, like burning stars"; but even now, I doubt not, a score of blithesome librettists are hard at work materialising them, and before the century is out we shall see them, one and all, defile across

the stage. In the meantime, *The New Barmaid** claims our homage at the Avenue Theatre. She is a reasonably sprightly and decidedly tuneful young person, and her morals, you will be pleased to learn, are irreproachable. A captious critic might object that she is not very much of a barmaid; but that merely shows that the authors, Messrs. Frederic Bowyer and W. E. Sprange, are well in the literary movement. The reign of realism, as every one knows, is over. We are now all for poetry, the ideal, the spiritual; and here we have the poetry of the beer-engine, the romance of the tap-room. Need I say that the New Barmaid turns out to be a "born lady" and entitled to hold up her head among the noblest in the land? She is the long-lost daughter of a—no, not of a Clergyman—but of a Colonel, a real, live Colonel. She proves her claim to this proud position by singing the Indian Lullaby with which her ayah used to soothe her infant slumbers; her father takes her to his martial bosom, to the confusion of the villainess who had usurped her place; and the hero's haughty mother, a lady of rank and title, withdraws all opposition to their union. We are here, you observe, in a region infinitely aloof from the mephitic atmosphere of the problem play. Here is no probing of social

* February 12. Transferred to Opera Comique, June 6. Last night, July 3 (?).

sores, no morbid anatomy, no suburban psychology. Our craving for the ideal is satisfied, and life seems the brighter and the better for our too brief vision of these pure women and brave men. We leave the theatre with a new sense of chivalrous reverence for the ministering angels of the refreshment-room, vividly reminded of one of those simple, fundamental facts which, in the rush of modern life, we are apt to overlook—to wit, that, for aught we know, any one of the ladies who so gracefully dispense the hospitalities of Messrs. Spiers & Pond may at any moment prove to be the long-lost daughter of a Colonel.

The farce, in sober earnest, is a fair enough specimen of its class. The story is absolutely null and void, and the dialogue is exceedingly flat; but the songs are written with a good deal of point, and Mr. John Crook has set them to some spirited rhythms. Moreover, the tone of the piece is not by any means so alcoholic as the title might lead one to expect. As such things go, indeed, it is quite inoffensive. Miss Agnes Delaporte, as the New Barmaid, sings very prettily, and strolls agreeably through the action. Miss Lottie Collins, as a lady journalist, does her turns with that aggressive and irresistible physical energy which is the main secret of success on the music-hall stage. There you have in a nutshell the difference between

dramatic and music-hall art—the one tends, as an ideal, towards self-suppression, the other aims at, and frequently attains, the maximum of possible self-assertion. In Miss Lottie Collins it is of course music-hall art that we look for—and she sees that we get it. The comedians, Mr. Shine and Mr. Dallas, work hard, and with success, to keep the audience amused. To Mr. Dallas is assigned the pleasing duty of putting the German Emperor in his place, and holding out the laurel-branch, so to speak, to Dr. Jameson. Mr. Harrison Brockbank plays the hero very handsomely and sings well, and Miss Marie Denton does some effective dancing.

Mrs. Lucette Ryley's "light comedy," at Terry's, entitled *Jedbury Junior*,* charmed the first-night audience by dint of sheer amiability and unpretentiousness. I can scarcely think of another play which sets common-sense criticism so airily at defiance. It conciliates the sympathies while it insults the intelligence. Farcical is far too mild a term for the plot; the Fuegian marriage on which it is founded would scarcely pass muster in opera-bouffe. What is not preposterous in the action is flagrantly conventional—the relation of the father and son, for example, and the detection of the defaulting

* February 14—May 23. Reproduced with different cast at Globe Theatre, December 21—February 5, 1897.

manager. Yet this foolish fable, part threadbare, part extravagant, somehow keeps us interested and amused—why, I really cannot tell. No doubt, you suggest, Mrs. Ryley has an unusual gift of dialogue, and thereby conceals or excuses the deficiencies of the plot. But no! that is not the explanation, either; at least I remember nothing particularly brilliant in the dialogue. The only definable quality which Mrs. Ryley seems to possess in at all a remarkable degree is an instinct for effective "business," for little bits of illustrative and entertaining action. For instance, she has quite a knack of bringing down her curtain, unconventionally and yet effectively, on quiet touches of half-humorous sentiment. Here, I fancy, we are on the track of the real secret. The charm of *Jedbury Junior* lies in the nice admixture of sentiment with humour, sincerity with caricature. While the tone throughout is of the very lightest, we are gradually brought to take a sympathetic interest in the personages and their fortunes. They are a good deal more human and amiable than the cynical puppets of commonplace farce. And with all its extravagance the piece is not vulgar. It is gay and irresponsible enough, but its motives are not sordid nor its incidents degrading. The first two acts, I confess, did not stir me to any rapture of enthusiasm, but the third is really delightful. Christopher Jedbury is a character after Mr. Kerr's own heart, and he plays it

admirably. He is too good a comedian to be wasted on mere buffoonery. Miss Maude Millett plays the heroine with her unfailing gaiety and charm, and finds opportunity in the third act for a piece of real acting such as is seldom called for in her line of characters. Mr. John Beauchamp, too, manages to put more than conventional ability into one or two passages of a sufficiently conventional part; while Miss Emily Cross is good as his wife, and Mr. Gilbert Farquhar is excellent as the butler who serves as a sort of diplomatic telephone between the cantankerous couple. There is humour in this idea, which would have borne a little more elaboration. Miss Eva Moore and Mr. Arthur Playfair were good in minor parts.

Mr. Scott Buist has revived at the Strand Miss Eweretta Lawrence's adaptation of Von Moser's *Ultimo*, entitled *On 'Change*.* It is a capital farce of its class, and amuses the audience mightily. Personally, I confess to taking very little pleasure in Mr. Felix Morris's performance of the Scotch professor. His dialect, though not that of an educated man, is genuine enough; but his humour seems to me niggling, monotonous, and quite unnecessarily ugly. The rest of the company, on the other hand—Mr. William Farren, Mr. Yorke Stephens, Mr. Scott Buist, Mr. James Welch, Mr. E. H. Kelly, and Miss

* February 15—March 13.

Eweretta Lawrence—play with excellent spirit and enjoyment, so that the fun, which is good of its kind, is never suffered to flag.

VIII.

MR. GRUNDY'S CRACK OF DOOM.

26th February.

MY DEAR SYDNEY GRUNDY,—This Saturday evening, February 22nd, I come home from the Comedy Theatre to find on my table an article signed by you, with a request from the Editor of the *Theatre* that I should "mention it next Tuesday." Well, I *will* mention it.

Personally, I have to thank you for an exhilarating quarter of an hour. You call me "non-human," but I assure you I am quite human enough to be accessible to flattery. You have always overrated my humble powers, but this time—well, it is very nice of you, and of course I like it, but really and sincerely I must put in a disclaimer. You say that the drama is "Marching to its Doom," and marching, forsooth, to my music! True, you intimate that others are piping the same seductive tune; but they are my "satellites"—I am the head and front of their offending. It is I who have swamped the theatres

with musical farces. It is I (to all intents and purposes) who have perpetrated those detrimental plays *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray*, *The Notorious Mrs. Ebbsmith*, and *The Benefit of the Doubt*. The shareholders of the Alhambra, the Empire, and the Syndicate Halls owe their dividends mainly to me (I wish they would hurry up with their testimonial). In one passage, indeed, you even go the length of asserting that the whole first-night public takes its cue from me and my satellites: "This clique has gained almost complete ascendancy over our first-night audiences, with the result that their verdicts are worthless and misleading, and that, under its fanatical escort, we are marching to our doom."

No, my dear Grundy—I may be a "notorious crank and egotist," but I am not such an egotist as to swallow all this. Take heart of grace, I beseech you. I don't believe you are marching to your doom at all; and if you are, it is certainly not I that am heading the procession. If only you keep marching, indeed, you have nothing to fear. If you insist on lagging behind and "marking time," your doom—fossilisation and oblivion—will inevitably overtake you.

Do you know why I was so particular in stating the moment at which your article reached me? Because I had just left a theatre where a well-made play*—

* Comedy Theatre: *Gossip*, February 22—March 21.

and salvation, you tell us, lies in well-made plays alone—had been received with applause by the stalls over which, you say, my baneful ascendancy is complete, but had been greeted so ominously by the gallery (the last stronghold, according to you, of the true public) that neither the authors, nor the manager on their behalf, ventured to show face before the curtain. Even the ever fluent and ready-witted Mr. Comyns Carr, who came up smiling after *Delia Harding** (another well-made play!), lurked invisible after *Gossip*. Yet here was a play after your own heart, a “mechanical rabbit,” if ever there was one (“only mechanical rabbits are permissible on the stage”), utterly innocent of “dissection and analysis of character,” and put together with a cynical intentness on the one paramount duty of the dramatist, according to you—that of appealing to the multitude. It bears, indeed, a striking resemblance to one of the very best of well-made plays: it is an *n*th dilution of *A Scrap of Paper*. Well, you may take my word for it that the gallery (the true public, mark you!) would have none of Messrs. Fitch and Dietrichstein’s mechanical rabbit, while the stalls (my satellites!) politely applauded its clockwork gambols. It is quite possible that the public may flock to see Mrs. Langtry’s dresses and diamonds; but, believe me, the play will in that case succeed in spite of its mechanical-

* See *Theatrical World* of 1895, p. 128.

rabbit qualities, which are all to its disadvantage. Yet it is not the worst of its tribe, either ; it is human and entertaining in comparison with *Delia Harding*. Nor were these the only memories associated with the Comedy Theatre which served as a sort of overture to your article. I remembered—it needed no great stretch of memory—my last visit to that theatre, on the triumphant 28th of December which gave us *The Late Mr. Castello*. As you are probably aware, I myself did not like that play; but the first-night audience, of which you complain so bitterly, appeared to revel in it; the great mass of the press was entirely favourable; and some papers lost no opportunity of puffing and paragraphing it week by week. Your article throws light on a question which has ever since puzzled me at intervals—how the author of *Sowing the Wind* ever came to write such a play? “If the public is thoughtless and vulgar,” you say, “then thoughtlessness and vulgarity are the factors of the problem we have to solve.” So it was in that inspiring belief that you gave your wit and invention a holiday, and set about vulgarising, for the nonce, the talent of one of the most delicate and delightful of our actresses! So be it; you acted up to your principle, in no half-hearted fashion. Do you find the result encouraging? In spite of the aforesaid puffing, in spite of the reinforcement of the bill by a new one-act piece with Mr. Cyril Maude in the

leading part, the play ran a scant eight weeks, and *Gossip* reigns in its stead. Why, my dear Grundy, even that "mere study of character" *The Benefit of the Doubt* ran longer than that; and—well, since you challenge me to take the box-office point of view, I should like to compare your "returns" with Mr. Pinero's. It appears, then, by your own criterion, that Mr. Pinero was better employed in studying character than you in solving the problem of thoughtlessness and vulgarity. Whence it ensues (your logical mind will at once perceive) that you ought straightway to pander to the public by writing a play like *The Benefit of the Doubt*. Heavens! how I wish you would!

Instead of doing so, you make a pathetic appeal to Mr. Pinero not to let himself be lured into the work-house by the "fawning first-nighters," who are, you tell him, "destroying our business before our eyes." Business! Ah, yes! that is the word; I seem to hear an unwonted tremor in your voice as you utter it, and point with warning finger to the gaunt portal of the Union looming ahead. Well, now, I too have the greatest respect for the word "business." The tears don't come to my eyes as I write it; but you are quite wrong in supposing that any reasonable critic makes it his principle, or his practice, to ignore the economics of the theatre. Mr. Bernard Shaw, for instance, whom you cite as "the crankiest of all these

stove-pipe fanatics," is never tired of discussing ways and means; and I fancy that, as an economist, Mr. Shaw can measure himself against even the author of *A Bunch of Violets*. For my own part, I think a critic is bound in the first place to consider each individual play as a work of art, not as an article of commerce; but in the second place to give earnest study and thought to the economic conditions of the theatre as a whole, and to regulate his general policy in reasonable accord with them. I remember the time when you were as scornful as I of the theory that it is a critic's business to estimate the "money in" a play, and praise it in proportion to its chance of success. Years and royalties have brought you round to that philosophic view. I cannot share it; but there is a world of difference between writing with your eye perpetually on the booking-sheet, and altogether ignoring that momentous document.

Now, as to this threat of the workhouse, this prophecy of "doom." You mention three plays, all by Mr. Pinero, in which the deadly blight of character-study—that dramatic phylloxera—is to be seen pursuing its ravages. You admit that *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray* was a great success, but you explain that it was a well-made play—defining the well-made play, by implication, as one in which the "long arm of coincidence" is suffered freely to put its finger in the pie. Of *The Notorious Mrs. Ebbsmith* and *The*

Benefit of the Doubt, on the other hand, you roundly assert that "there is no doubt of which to give them the benefit," and that "the public would have none of them." Of *The Benefit of the Doubt* I have already spoken. If the public "would have none of it" we must conclude that it would have less than none of *The Late Mr. Castello*; and, as a matter of fact, the play by no means spelt beggary for Mr. Pinero. As for *The Notorious Mrs. Ebbsmith*, would it surprise you to learn that for sixty nights it was the greatest financial success that Mr. Pinero ever had as an author, or Mr. Hare as a manager? Surprising or not, that is the fact; and there is no reason to doubt that, but for an inevitable and unfortunate change in the cast, its attraction would have lasted much longer. Here, again, we are face to face with a problem which, I own, baffles my mathematics: If the public "would have none" of *Mrs. Ebbsmith* which ran for sixty nights to full houses, how much would it have of those well-made plays *An Old Jew* and *Slaves of the Ring* which ran for about twenty-five and fifteen nights respectively to houses—as to which I have no information? "But hold!" you say. "It is the very gist of my argument that the real, the great public would have flocked to these well-made plays if you enthusiastic eccentrics, stove-pipe fanatics, notorious cranks and egotists, and fawning first-nighters had but given them the chance!" Come,

come, my dear Grundy, let us discuss the art, the business, we both love, like grown men and not like fretful children. You know that I thought both these plays, and the latter especially, worthy of a better fate ; but surely you do not need to be told that the theatrical world is not a sphere of ideal justice in which success ever has been, or ever can be, nicely apportioned to what may be called abstract merit. A hundred chances, of which the temper of a first-night audience is only one, go to make or mar a play. The satire of *An Old Jew*, even if it had been more relevant than I thought it, was too special, too "shoppy," to appeal forcibly to the great public—all the more honour to you for choosing the theme! Mr. Hare apart, the acting of *Slaves of the Ring* was so execrable that no play could have survived it. That is one of the chances to which you are exposed in your gloriously aleatory calling. You suffered in *Slaves of the Ring* just as Mr. Pinero did in *The Benefit of the Doubt* ; and you suffered to an even greater extent, because the acting was so thoroughly bad as quite to mar the first-night effect. Never mind! one down, t'other come on! Keep a stiff upper lip, give us another play or two as good as, or better than, *Sowing the Wind*, and I promise you shall see the century through without having to go to the parish for your bread-and-butter, and perhaps a taste of marmalade o' Sundays.

One word, by the way, as to *Michael and his Lost Angel*, which I "hugged to my artistic bosom," while the public "rejected and repudiated it with emphasis." Are you aware that its receipts were going up by leaps and bounds, that on the last night of its run it played to £231, and that its ten performances brought in £1,478, or an average of over £147 a night? I do not maintain, of course, that these figures indicated assured success; but I should like to hear what you would say if a manager took off a play of yours under similar circumstances. Would you admit that "the public rejected and repudiated it with emphasis?" And, talking of that, don't you think a very pretty little comedy might be made out of *The Mystery of "Michael"*?

We may now, I think, turn back from business to art. You seem to imagine that the movement which is hurrying you to your doom is a movement from the well-made to the ill-made or unmade play. Strange delusion! It is a movement from the well-made to the better-made play; and really I should have thought that a technician like you would have recognised this. Is it possible that you saw *The Benefit of the Doubt*, when you can call it "a mere study of character"? Why, there was more delicate constructive skill, more mastery of situation, in the first two acts than in a dozen machine-made French intrigues. I think even Monsieur Scribe would have

realised this, though he might have agreed with you that Mr. Pinero had got too much human nature into the play to suit his taste. The third act was less happily conceived and constructed; but I cannot think that the unpinioning of the long arm of coincidence would have mended matters. Again, is it possible you saw *The Divided Way*, when you can count among my sins the encouragement I tried to give to the young author? Is it possible you saw it, and saw no promise in it? Is it possible that, seeing the promise, you would have had me say to myself, "There is no money in this sombre work by an unknown writer; go to, then! let us slaughter it"? Trust me, my dear Grundy, the ultimate and abiding prosperity of your "business" depends on the development, not the repression, of new talent. It is very short-sighted prudence to grudge a helping hand to a promising beginner.

Of course, I am far from denying that we are at present in the midst of rather a "silly season." With *Trilby* and *The Prisoner of Zenda* drawing crowded houses eight times a week; with your friends, the "thoughtless and vulgar" public, wallowing in the crass ineptitudes of *The Sign of the Cross*; and with musical farces running year in, year out, at half-a-dozen theatres; the outlook of the moment is certainly far from inspiring. But what would you have? There always have been, there always will be, fluctuations of

fashion. You and I have lived through far sillier seasons than this, yet the crack of doom has not fallen. Can you deny that there has been extraordinary progress in our time? When you and I first knew each other, sixteen years ago, did we venture to dream that the successful production on the English stage of such plays as *Sowing the Wind* and *The Greatest of These* was anywhere within measurable distance? Was not *Slaves of the Ring*, when you wrote it, considered an extravagantly and impossibly daring piece of work? And how has this advance been brought about? Not, surely, by the policy you now urge upon Mr. Pinero, of persistently and systematically writing down to that mythical monster the average playgoer of London, the provinces, and America—for nothing less than world-wide “returns” will now content you. No! what happened was that Mr. Pinero, Mr. Jones, and you yourself in unguarded moments, wrote plays, without heeding the great public, simply to satisfy your own souls, and gathered round you a relatively small but still a very large public, which has assuredly not left you without your reward. Why should you be suddenly panic-stricken, and conclude that this public will follow you no further? Why call a halt in this half-plaintive, half-peremptory fashion? Can it be that you have yourself progressed to the limit of your intelligence and talent, and cannot endure

that others should go beyond you? I do not for a moment believe it, my dear Grundy. You will get over this fit of the blues as the public will get over its infatuation for the humour of Mr. "Owen Hall" and the pathos of Mr. Wilson Barrett. I am only interpreting the oracles of the box-office itself when I adjure you to leave off solving problems of thoughtlessness and vulgarity, and apply yourself once more, in honourable and cordial rivalry with your fellows, to the creation of rational and human works of art.

In the meantime, by way of keeping the wolf from the door, why not give us a good musical farce? Even in that department the public puts up with inanity only while it can get nothing better.—Yours always,

W. A.

VIII-A.

WHAT DOES THE PUBLIC WANT? *

IN Mr. Sydney Grundy's vivacious plea for a strictly commercial drama, there occurs a significant saying which his critics, oddly enough, seem to have overlooked. "When you announce a new play," he cries

* This article, written some weeks later, is placed here, as it forms a postscript to my letter to Mr. Grundy.

to the managers, "open your box-office to the public which pays its money, and give it the article it wants. Don't emulate the British shopkeeper, whose habit it is, and has ever been, not to sell what his customers want to buy, but to make his customers buy what he chooses to sell." Many writers have gone out to battle against Mr. Grundy on behalf of the critics and dramatists (himself, by implication, among the number) whom he accused of luring the stage to its doom; but no one, up to the present moment, has had the chivalry, nay, the common gratitude, to take up the cudgels for the British Shopkeeper. There must indeed be a decline in our national spirit when such wantonly misanthropic and unpatriotic remarks are suffered to pass unchallenged. Is not the British Shopkeeper the very backbone of the nation's greatness? Is he not the most triumphantly successful shopkeeper the world has ever seen? Has he not armies to push his wares and navies to protect his markets? Yet here comes a mere idle playwright, who very likely could not tell a ledger from a day-book, a charter-party from a Chartered Company, and holds up the British shopkeeper, not as an example to the world, but as a salutary warning to a handful of theatrical managers! Can Mr. Grundy have forgotten that soul-stirring patriotic design of John Leech's, which represents a Frenchman saying to John Bull, as a company of volunteers is marching

past, "But, sare, I thought you vas von nation of shopkeepares!"—whereunto John replies, "So we are, Mossoo—and these are the boys that mind the shop." Even taking the word shopkeeper in its most restricted and literal sense, I cannot see that the policy of the British tradesman has been so notoriously suicidal as Mr. Grundy's argument would imply. It does not appear that the shopkeeping interest is "marching to its doom." And observe that it is no novel and pernicious policy which the managers are adjured not to emulate. "It is, *and has ever been*, the shopkeeper's habit to make his customers buy what he chooses to sell." If it be true that this "has ever been" his habit, we can only conclude, since he has thriven on it so mightily, that it is a very good habit indeed, which managers should be urged to "emulate" with all their might. But does Mr. Grundy correctly represent the habit of the British shopkeeper? Not altogether. His economics are a trifle summary. He overlooks certain not very recondite distinctions which have an important bearing upon the trade in plays as well as in other commodities.

There is a very marked difference between the demand for the fundamental necessities of life and the demand for superfluities. The one is constant and must be constantly supplied, the other is variable and capable of infinite modification. The one you

have simply to obey, the other you may, and in some cases must, create. The butcher or baker who should "not sell what his customers want to buy, but make them buy what he chooses to sell," would march to his doom in double-quick time. When people are hungry for bread, it is useless to offer them a stone, though it be carved by Phidias. I have heard of an ingenious gentleman who conceived the notion of feeding the British working-man upon tinned whale, as a cheap and nutritious substitute for butcher's meat; nay more, I have actually eaten of the whale, and found it palatable enough; but the British working-man insisted on having the beef and mutton he wanted to buy, not the whale which his would-be benefactor chose to sell. The beef of life, in short, must be continuously supplied, without much variation either as to quantity (per consumer) or quality; but there is no such uniformity in the demand for "trimmings." In a great many trades, the producer not only may, but must, go ahead of the consumer, and ever and anon create a new taste, supply an as yet non-existent demand. This holds good in a greater or less degree of all trades which minister to the æsthetic, as opposed to the merely animal, side of our nature. Take, for instance, the trade in textile fabrics. It follows from the constitution of the human body that a given number of people in a given climate will require a given amount of clothing.

But as dress serves not only for warmth but for adornment, there is perpetual change in the textures, colours, and patterns in vogue. Tailors, haberdashers, and milliners (unlike butchers and bakers) are for ever advertising "latest novelties," and it is the producer, not the consumer, who determines what the novelties shall be. The consumer, to be sure, has a certain liberty of choice. Among the many novelties placed before him, he selects this and rejects that; one thing "catches on" while another "falls flat." But the producer (or distributor) who waits for a demand to formulate itself before he sets about supplying it is apt to be a day too late for the fair. In the æsthetic trades, if we may call them so, the really successful shopkeeper is precisely he who "makes his customers buy what he chooses to sell." He must not, indeed, fantasticate at random in the wares he places before them. He must exercise a subtle insight, foresight, sympathy, divination. He must, quite literally, know better than his customers themselves what they have tired of and what they are yearning for. In a word (though he probably would not know the meaning of the word), he must be a profound psychologist. The great secret of æsthetic "shopkeeping," then, lies in supplying non-existent demands, or, more precisely, summoning into active existence potential and latent tastes. The principle is illustrated every day in the penny-toy trade. Be-



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fore the "bogey man" or the collapsible "Mrs. Chant" was brought out, could it be said that there was the slightest demand for these objects? Four million people awoke in London one fine morning without the vaguest idea that a miniature skeleton dancing on a string was necessary to complete their happiness. The toy is put on the streets, and before an hour has passed thousands have discovered that this is the very thing their souls were yearning for. A great demand sets in, and is active for a few weeks; then the toy has "had its run," and the producer must determine what he will next, in Mr. Grundy's phrase, "choose to sell."

The theatrical manager is simply a dealer in toys, which he offers, not at a penny, but, say, at an average price of five shillings. The demand he caters for—the appetite for theatrical playthings—is, in the mass, pretty constant. Entertainments of some sort the public insists on having, almost as imperatively as it insists on having beef and bread; but the theatrical shopkeeper is free to determine the particular sort of entertainment he will "choose to sell." He may, of course, do a certain trade by waiting to see what articles are in lively demand at other shops, and imitating them as best he may. But in so doing he always runs the risk of coming too late and creating a glut in a waning market. For instance, the most popular toy of the moment is the Svengali "bogey-

man"; but the wise shopkeeper will see in his inordinate vogue a reason for *not* imitating him, but casting about for another "line." The real successes are made, not by the men who crowd to surfeit an appetite which is patent to every one, but by those who divine and conjure up from the vasty deep a hitherto unsuspected demand. Two seasons ago, the Second Mrs. Tanqueray was as popular a toy at five shillings as the collapsible "Mrs. Chant" at a penny—not because Mr. Pinero and Mr. Alexander had waited to see what their customers wanted to buy, but because they knew, without waiting, what they chose to sell. The true principle for the theatrical toyman is not to look anxiously at the other goods in the market and imitate the most successful, but to think only of the intrinsic merits of the article he, for his part, proposes to vend. Let it be thoroughly good of its kind—a spirited, ingenious, neatly-finished, interesting toy—and it matters very little what particular class it happens to belong to. I can remember no instance of a play which failed simply because it was a "problem-play" or a "sex-play" or any other sort of play. There is always some inherent weakness or some defect of representation to account for a failure—except, indeed, in cases where a manager, too intent on selling "what his customers want," has come upon an overstocked market, and offered dates to a public already sated with figs.

IX.

"FOR THE CROWN"—"THE ROMANCE OF THE
SHOPWALKER."

4th March.

MONSIEUR FRANÇOIS COPPÉE has invented, or stumbled upon, one of the finest plots in existence. The story of *Pour la Couronne** is singularly beautiful, and essentially dramatic. The very greatest dramas in the world, to my thinking, are those in which one absolutely simple, titanic passion sweeps, torrent-like, to its doom. Such are *Romeo and Juliet*, *Othello*, *Macbeth*, and *Phèdre*. But many critics place even higher (and there is a great deal to be said for this view) those dramas of casuistry, to use the word in its very largest sense, of which the *Antigone* may stand as the type—dramas arising from an irreconcilable conflict of duties, or from the imposition by circumstances of a duty, in itself clear and imperative, which yet jars so terribly upon the fundamental instincts of humanity that it represents itself to the conscience as a crime. Such a "pious crime," in her own phrase, is that of *Antigone*; but in her case the conflict does not come home so forcibly to us

* Lyceum, February 27—May 30.

moderns as it did, no doubt, to the Greeks. To us it appears that, granted the importance of the rites of sepulture, her duty to her brother's restless ghost so far outweighs her duty towards the State, embodied in Creon, as to render the conflict, in sporting phrase, "a hollow thing." Indeed we are apt to think of Creon as a mere vindictive tyrant who may be thwarted without a qualm. Much clearer and more appalling, to our modern sense, is the clash of duties in the case of Constantine Brancomir, compelled to shed his father's blood in defence of his country, of Christendom, and even of his father's honour. Please do not run away with the notion that I place Monsieur Coppée on a level with Sophocles because I compare the naked motives, so to speak, of the two plays, and find that of *Pour la Couronne* more fundamental and universal, less dependent on local and temporary habits of thought, than that of the *Antigone*. To us, indeed, the idea that the welfare of a man's spirit depends on the due burial of his body is a mere piece of folk-lore, while we accept it as a commonplace that there are circumstances in which rebellion against the State becomes a positive virtue. The horror of parricide, on the other hand, is no piece of folk-lore, but a living, compulsive sentiment. It costs us no mental attitudinising to realise Constantine's abhorrence of his deed; while, at the same time, the motives that

drove him to it, the hatred of treachery, the knowledge that the fate of his country and of Europe hung in the balance, seem to us absolutely imperative and irresistible. We may tell ourselves that these motives ought, in strict reason, to cancel the filial sentiment, and that Constantine ought to go on his way with no more self-reproach than if he had struck down any other sentinel found faithless to his trust. Such abstract speculations do not for a moment weaken the hold of the story upon our sympathies. We know that strict reason is nowhere dominant in human affairs, and least of all as against so deep-seated a sentiment as the shrinking from parricide. It is perfectly natural, and, in a man of his character, inevitable, that Constantine's act should play havoc with his nerve, impair his military talent, and produce in him all the symptoms of conscious guilt. Thus he is already looked upon as the Jonah in the ship of state, even before his stepmother, with every appearance of justice, accuses him of the very treachery he has imperilled his soul to prevent. His situation at this point I take leave to regard as an unequalled instance of tragic irony. He cannot "kill his father over again" by defending himself at the expense of the dead hero's reputation. He even welcomes the opportunity of expiating his "pious crime" by taking his father's shame upon himself. Thus he endures in silence the extremity

of ignominious outrage, and dies, degraded and execrated,

“Even at the base of Michael’s statua,”

which entirely omits to “run blood,” or otherwise betray the slightest emotion on the part of the powers above. I say that this is one of the fine conceptions of literature, a thing of classic dignity and strength. Compare the ideas, the elements, of M. Coppée’s drama with those of *Hernani*, *Ruy Blas*, or *Le Roi s’amuse*—masterpieces of the school to which it nominally belongs—and you can scarcely fail to realise that Constantine, simply in virtue of his story, is much more akin to Orestes and Antigone than to the bandit nobles, lackey-ministers, and buffoon-avengers of the romantic stage. Victor Hugo looked for his effects to external antitheses, maskings and unmaskings, starts and surprises. *Hernani* is a superb and flaunting melodrama; *Pour la Couronne* is, or might have been, an austere tragedy.

Unfortunately, the tragedy has yet to be written. Monsieur Coppée’s work merely proves, what scarcely needed proof, that it is not the theme but the poet that makes the play. A first-rate theme handled by a third-rate poet—a rhetorician, not a dramatist at all—comes out, not first-rate, nor even second-rate, but on the poet’s own level, third-rate. I have given above a sort of Röntgen photograph of *Pour la Cour-*

onne, showing its skeleton apart from its outward tissues. But it is, after all, through these outward tissues that an organism appeals to the æsthetic sense; and in this case the fleshly integument is painfully flabby. There is no genuinely dramatic blood, nerve, and muscle in the play. The skeleton is merely padded, as it were, with a fatty, saccharine deposit of conventional sentiment and imagery. I am speaking, remember, of the French play, and in no way reproaching Mr. John Davidson. Mr. Davidson has done his work well. He has made more than one structural improvement (notably in dispensing with Constantine's eavesdropping at the end of the second act), and he has cast the dialogue in nervous and sonorous blank verse, not always regular enough in its accents to be quite pleasing to my ear, but showing in many passages the touch of the true poet. All that was required of him he has done; he has ably transposed Monsieur Coppée's work from the French into the English convention, from the alexandrine to the pentameter mode. The moment has not yet come for any more thoroughgoing transfiguration of the story. As yet it is Monsieur Coppée's property, and the day of splendid piracies is past. But when, by lapse of time, the theme has fallen into the common domain, it will certainly be "hatched over again and hatched different" by the first dramatist of genius who happens to come along. It will be treated as

Shakespeare probably treated the *Hamlet* of Kyd, or whoever his predecessor may have been. If the coming Shakespeare will take my advice, he will deal very radically with the Militza motive, which seems to me a piece of cheap sentimentalism. But whatever method he pursues, and whatever medium he chooses to work in, he will get character, analysis, dramatic nerve and fibre into the thing, instead of merely presenting a framework of situation swathed in verbiage.

The play is most picturesquely mounted at the Lyceum, and by no means ill-acted. Mr. Forbes Robertson is admirable as Constantine, embodying to the life the stained-glass hero of Monsieur Coppée's imagination; and Mr. Charles Dalton as Michael, in a somewhat rough and uncouth fashion, brings out effectively the barbarism of the father in contrast with the chivalry of the son. Miss Winifred Emery, accomplished actress as she is, lacks the sensual subtlety of Basilide. Why do managers insist on making their selections from so narrow a ring of artistes? I could name, on the spur of the moment, three or four actresses, at present disengaged, who have the initial qualifications for the part of Basilide, in which Miss Emery is clearly deficient. As Militza, Mrs. Patrick Campbell distinctly disappointed me. The character seemed so entirely within her means that here, I thought, she was secure of an easy success. And certainly she looked the part to

admiration, making a perfect picture in each of the exquisite costumes which this poor camp-follower managed somehow to carry around in her wallet. But in her playing I could discover nothing beyond a mincing prettiness of speech and a self-conscious grace of movement and attitude. I begin to have a suspicion that among Mrs. Campbell's many gifts and charms one supreme gift is not to be found—that sympathetic imagination which enables the artiste to lose herself in her character and act it, not only with calculation of the brain, but with inspiration of the heart. Mrs. Campbell is far too clever a woman to "give herself away" by attempting effects she cannot achieve. She walks gracefully and adroitly through her parts, and her beauty does the rest. And, indeed, so long as this method is applied to Militza and not to Juliet, I don't know why one should complain. After all, beauty is beauty, and a thing to be thankful for. Mr. Ian Robertson looked superb as the Bishop-King, and Mr. Mackintosh was picturesque as the Turkish spy.

An agreeable, unpretending piece of work is *The Romance of the Shopwalker*, by Mr. Robert Buchanan and "Charles Marlowe" (Miss Harriet Jay), at the Vaudeville.* The story has been told a hundred times; the ready-made characters appeal direct to the ready-made sympathies of the average audience;

* February 26—March 28

and yet the "romance" (for it really deserves its title) is so genial and humane that I was thoroughly amused and, in the third act, even moved by it. There is a touch of delightful irony in the interruption of one of the Shopwalker's rhapsodies about "all men being equal in the sight of Heaven," by the curt demand, "Sign, please!" The whole first act, indeed, is bright, novel, and entertaining. The second is more conventional, and even becomes painful at times; but the third is really dramatic, the contrast between Tomkins's two harangues to the crowd being excellently imagined. Mr. Bernard Shaw, I observe, seems to bracket this play with its predecessor from the same pens, and to feel, somehow or other, that the merits of *The Shopwalker* justify his inexplicable tenderness towards *Miss Brown*. Let him contrast what the authors have done for Mr. Weedon Grossmith with what they did for Mr. Fred Kerr, and he will surely realise the difference between the two pieces. To Mr. Grossmith the authors have given an opportunity for a genuine character-creation, a performance which shows his admirable talent in its most favourable light. Of Mr. Kerr—also an excellent comedian—they made a pitiable laughing-stock, obscuring his talent, and subjecting him to senseless indignities such as account, in great measure, for the instinctive disesteem in which the world has always held the

actor's calling. For my part, I shall long retain a kindly remembrance of Mr. Grossmith's Thomas Tomkins; when I think of "Miss Brown," I blush for my species. Mr. David James was clever as Tomkins's Mephistopheles, and his Scotch was above reproach except for a single superfluous letter. Birnam Wood shall come to Dunsinane ere an authentic Scot shall be heard to say "stigmar upon." Miss M. A. Victor gave a highly-coloured portrait of the Shopwalker's mother, Miss May Palfrey was pleasant as the haughty Lady Evelyn, and Miss Nina Boucicault made a real character of the vivacious Lady Mabel.

X.

"THE GRAND DUKE"—"MRS. PONDERBURY."

11th March.

WITHOUT trespassing on the domain of my colleague "R.S.H.," may I state the impression produced by Mr. Gilbert's new libretto upon a sedulous Savoyard—nay, a faithful and grateful adherent of the Gilbert-Sullivan-Carte triumvirate even from Dean Street days, before the Savoy was thought of? I have had no opportunity of conferring with "R.S.H." in order to

"harmonise our gospels." We do not get into the witness-box to tell a preconcerted story. If we contradict each other, the reader must e'en pay his money (at the Savoy) and take his choice between us.

Like the policeman in *Dandy Dick*, "I have a theory" as to the origin of *The Grand Duke*.^{*} It may not square with the facts, but as it conveys the gist of my criticism, I state it for what it is worth. Some sort of connection there certainly is between *The Grand Duke* and that old "Tale from Blackwood," *The Duke's Dilemma*, which must have struck so many people as a ready-made theme for a comic opera. Mr. Gilbert, I conceive, made a note of it for future use, but, other subjects intervening, found himself anticipated by Messrs. "Alfred Murray" and H. B. Farnie in *The Prima Donna* (so I think it was called), at the Avenue Theatre. Feeling, then, that he could not use the theme simply as it stood (though such an idea is surely common property), Mr. Gilbert thought to make it incontestably his own by introducing one of the peculiar inventions which all the world recognises at a glance as "Gilbertian." Hence the Statutory Duel, with all its complex consequences—and hence, alas! the feeling that there are two distinct themes in the piece, neither of which is thoroughly or satisfactorily worked out. We have

^{*} March 7—July 10.

the ingredients of a comic opera whipped-up into a Gilbertian extravaganza; as though a cook should set out to make a cherry pie, and, having got the materials together, should change his mind and try to pass them off as gooseberry fool. The idea of *The Duke's Dilemma* is that, for some reason which I forget, the courtiers of a German Grand Duke all go on strike just as he is expecting the arrival of the beautiful Princess whom he is to marry; whereupon he presses into the service a company of strolling players, who enact, for the nonce, the high-well-born officials of His Transparency's Household. Well, for this Mr. Gilbert gives us all the materials—the parsimonious potentate (his parsimony would account for the strike of courtiers), the beautiful betrothed, and the troupe of comedians to fill the different offices, from Prime Minister down to Licensor of Plays. But, practically, nothing comes of it. The courtiers do not strike, they vanish away without rhyme or reason; the Duke's penuriousness leads to nothing at all, and is simply an irrelevant deformity, like a cast in his eye; the beautiful betrothed has nothing to do with the action, except to spin it out for twenty minutes or so at the very end; one of the comedians does, indeed, take the Duke's place, but it is to save him from a conspiracy, not to help him out of a dilemma; and though the apportionment of offices among members of the company is elaborately prepared for, it never

takes place. On the other hand, the laborious device of the Statutory Duel—which satirises nothing, symbolises nothing, travesties nothing—is made the mainspring of the whole action. Mr. Gilbert’s really felicitous paradoxes are feats of verbal logic, fantastically burlesquing our tendency to take words for things. But this quibble is invented without provocation, as it were, without the smallest aptitude or relevance, merely to bring about a state of affairs which might have been brought about quite naturally, without any quibble at all; while the consequences of the frigid invention are relentlessly deduced until the brain reels. Furthermore, the disappearance of all motive for the Grand Duke’s meanness makes it much more ugly and painful than entertaining. It was quite a relief to me to find him practically banished from the second act.

On the whole, then, *The Grand Duke* will never take its place in my affections along with *The Pirates*, *Patience*, *The Mikado*, and *The Gondoliers*. Even in the individual numbers, Mr. Gilbert gives us none of his very happiest ideas or most irresistible rhythms. He is rather too much inclined, I fancy, to fall back upon merely burlesque rhymes—“lowest, ghoest”; “chooses, shoeses”; “people, weep’ll”—and those which require an italicised false emphasis to make them rhymes at all, for example, “maniac kick, Bacchic.” These freaks are amusing now and then,

but should be sparingly used. I presume it is a misprint in the libretto that makes Ludwig sing :

"There they'd satisfy their thirst on a *recherche* cold *ἀριστον*."

It ought surely to read, "they'd satisfy their twist on," etc. But the most surprising licence (for so punctilious a workman) is this :

"Should he rate you rightly—leftly—
Shut your ears and love him deafly,"

which is mere assonance not rhyme. Might not the passage run :

"If he ever acts unkindly,
Shut your eyes and love him blindly—
Should he call you names uncomely,
Shut your mouth and love him dumbly—
Should he objurgate you dreff'ly,
Shut your ears and love him deafly" ?

For "dreff'ly," or at any rate "dreffle," one can cite the classic authority of Br'er Rabbit. But though neither in conception nor in workmanship will *The Grand Duke* rank with the best of its predecessors, it remains a delightful entertainment. After picking all these holes in it, I should be charmed to go and see it again to-morrow. I shall not be happy, indeed, until I have by heart the entry of the Herald in the second act, one of the most exquisite bits of musical humour which we owe to the inimitable humorist

and musician, whose partnership, let us hope, has still many years and many triumphs before it.

You may or may not remember that when *Mrs. Ponderbury's Past* was produced at the Avenue Theatre last autumn, I treated it with as near an approach to contumely as my well-known urbanity would permit. I even dropped into American, in a friendly way, and declared that we "had no use" for third-rate French farces of this sort. Well, it appears I was wrong. After a fair run at the Avenue—I question whether it was altogether a gold mine, but doubtless it paid its way—it has been transferred to the Court,* with its title curtailed and its cast considerably altered. I went to the theatre with an earnest desire to find out what had attracted people to the play, and I discovered the secret of its success, not in the acting, properly so called (though that was good from the first), but in the irresistible effrontery with which Mr. Hawtreys and Miss Lottie Venne convert the second act into a screaming harlequinade. The piece is certainly laughable, and it does not lose, though neither can it be said to gain, by the substitution of Mrs. John Wood's comic talent for Miss Alma Stanley's imperial stature in the part of the redoubtable Mrs. Ponderbury. I wonder why it is that I cannot inure myself to the time-honoured vulgarities of these Anglo-Gallic farces. When Mrs. Ponderbury

* February 20—May 21.

offered her cheek to her lamb-like husband and said, "Take your dessert!" I found myself, quite involuntarily, writhing in my stall with a positive physical spasm of disgust and humiliation. It was very foolish—yet not more so, surely, than the laughter of the compact majority.

XI.

PINERO AT CAMBERWELL—COMEDIETTAS AT THE COMEDY.

18th March.

TAKING my walks abroad on the heights of Streatham the other day, I espied a very effective poster announcing that *The Benefit of the Doubt* was to be performed for six nights* at the Métropole Theatre, Camberwell. My curiosity was aroused for two reasons: first, because I thought it would be interesting to see what a suburban audience made of a piece in Mr. Pinero's later manner; secondly, because I was not without a hope that one or two of the characters which had been notoriously misrepresented at the Comedy might come off better at the hands of the country company. Accordingly, I availed myself of an invitation sent me some time

* March 9—14.

ago by the manager of the Métropole, Mr. J. B. Mulholland, and found myself last Thursday night one of a large audience—the stalls thinly peopled, but the rest of the house full—in the handsome and well-situated Camberwell playhouse. It was a most interesting and, let me add, an encouraging evening. The audience took the play in precisely the right spirit. There were things in it that surprised them, and points that passed over their heads. They were evidently on the look-out for “sentiments” to applaud, and they underlined one or two phrases which the author did not precisely intend for moral maxims. But they appreciated the characters at their just value, and were intensely interested in the process of the action. It beats me, as the saying goes, to imagine how any one who knows the meaning of the word “drama” can describe *The Benefit of the Doubt* as “mere character-study.” I don’t know where to look for a more animated story, or one of subtler and more skilful gradation, than that of the first two acts. Mark the stages by which it proceeds! First we have the inquietude of the Emptage household, waiting for news from the Divorce Court. Then we hear vaguely that things have gone well, that Mrs. Allingham’s petition is dismissed. There is joy in the house of Emptage; but a score of little delicate indications warn us that the rejoicing is premature, and we are seized with a sense of the irony of the

situation, while we eagerly await the entrance of Mr. and Mrs. Fraser. They appear, and desolation descends upon the Park Crescent drawing-room. Theo has been allowed "the benefit of the doubt"; she is branded, in effect, with the cruel Scotch verdict of "Not Proven." The household disperses, shrinking from the ordeal of facing its little world; and the husband and wife are left alone. Painful the scene is, no doubt, bitter and distressing; but dramatic in the very highest degree, a *scène à faire* if ever there was one. And it gives the action a new and vigorous impetus. When Theo, revolted at her husband's unfaith, has left her marriage-ring behind and gone forth into the world, and when Mrs. Cloys has divined, as we have, that Allingham's cottage is the place to look for her, we await the developments of the second act with an eagerness such as a schoolboy feels on laying down one volume of *The Three Musketeers* and taking up the next. No doubt we are interested in the characters as characters, as psychological studies; but that is, for the moment, a secondary matter. It is the action, the *adventure*, that grips us and sweeps us forward

" Like to the Pontic sea,
Whose icy current and compulsive course
Ne'er feels retiring ebb, but keeps due on
To the Propontic and the Hellespont."

And when the adventure comes, it more than realises our liveliest expectations. No need to go through the second act in detail; let me only say that, from the entrance of Olive Allingham onward, it presents an ascending scale of intensely dramatic conjunctures such as the veriest situation-monger that ever engineered a boulevard melodrama might well admire and envy. The scenes are conditioned by character and interpenetrated with observation and knowledge; but if we cut out every word that was not strictly and imperatively needed to carry on the story, reducing the act to a curt scenario, there would still remain a series of ingeniously devised and absorbingly interesting situations. And this is the play which we are asked to regard as "mere character-study"! I can think of few scenes more thrillingly, breathlessly dramatic than the whole long duologue between Jack Allingham and Theo Fraser, with Olive listening behind the curtain. It is a masterpiece of complex irony and haggard, tearless pathos. And bitter though it be, it is not cynical or inhuman. Poor Theo, in her "tawdry" way, is a brave, honest, kindly little woman, and it touches us to the quick to see her so hopelessly tangled among the briars of life. Mr. Pinero, it is true—and this some critics make a reproach to him!—has not set forth to teach us anything in particular; but nevertheless, or all the more, we have learnt a lesson of sympathy and of insight.

The acting, though fairly adequate, was not so instructive as I had hoped. Miss Rose Leclercq and Mr. Cyril Maude—both excellent—played their original parts of Mrs. Cloys and Sir Fletcher Portwood. Miss Ida Molesworth as Theo followed Miss Winifred Emery very closely and very cleverly. There was, indeed, nothing else, or nothing better, for her to do, and I am far from despairing of Miss Molesworth's originality because, in this part, she was content to display a remarkable talent for imitation. Miss Mary Keegan did not grapple very successfully with the extraordinarily difficult part of Olive Allingham, which demands an actress of the rarest gifts. Mr. W. Forster looked to perfection the part of Fraser of Locheen—handsome, gentlemanlike, puzzle-headed, smileless—and played it quietly and well. Of the rest—I have said the best I can find to say in the first line of this paragraph.

Blue or Green? and *The Bicycle*, two comediettas by Mrs. Hugh Bell—both witty and one apposite—together with an entirely new duologue by Mrs. W. K. Clifford, furnished forth the programme of a charity performance at the Comedy Theatre last Thursday afternoon.* Mrs. Clifford's play was called *A Honeymoon Tragedy*, and I must own that the title seemed to me fatally accurate. I could not laugh very heartily from the outset at the disillusion of the poor governess

* March 12.

on finding that her husband, whom she believed to be a childless widower, had children scattered like mile-stones on the Dover road, at every convent or boarding-school between Paris and Genoa. And when it appeared that the youngest child was dangerously ill, and that the Count, though authentic enough as to his title, was a poor tutor toiling for his children's bread, I confess that the fun of the thing entirely escaped me. Mrs. Clifford, however, had neatly hit off a certain type of Italian character in her Conte dal Mezzio, as one could divine through the somewhat uncertain performance and quite un-Italian English of Mr. Acton Bond. Mrs. Herbert Waring played the luckless governess very pleasantly. Replacing Miss Lottie Venne at a moment's notice, Miss Beatrice Herford gave a delightful monologue-sketch of an American dressmaker gossiping over her work. Miss Herford, who composes her own monologues, has a keen eye for character and an original strain of humour; while in delivery, and especially in pantomime, she is a finished artiste. Her only fault was a slight indistinctness at one or two points—not sufficient, however, to interfere with the almost continuous amusement of the audience.

XII.

"TRUE BLUE."

25th March.

AFTER devoting four and a half hours to the study of our first line of defence, under the guidance of "Leonard Outram and Stuart Gordon, Lieut. R.N.," I left the Olympic Theatre last Thursday-evening (or rather Friday morning) the richer by one piece of solid information. The five acts of *True Blue; or, Afloat and Ashore** had taught me that when a deck hand takes service in the stoke-hold (not "hole," as the vulgar term it), he receives ninepence a day extra, and has the privilege of smoking. By so much has Stuart Gordon, Lieut. R.N., advanced the frontiers of my knowledge; this little patch of firm ground he has, as it were, reclaimed for me from the misty marsh of nescience. If he has deceived me—but no! 'tis not to be imagined. We have it on his own authority—"he himself has said it, and it's greatly to his credit"—that "the title of a naval officer embraces all the finest attributes of a man." Among these attributes, a crystal veracity is evidently embraced; so the world in arms shall not shake my belief that the British seaman, under the aforesaid circumstances, is allowed

* March 19—April 25.

ninence a day extra, and his pipe. So far so good; I am gratified and reassured; but on reflection this seems a somewhat meagre outcome of four and a half hours' close and earnest study. Yet I defy any one to learn anything else from this "drama of the Royal Navy"—anything else, I mean, that is not flatly and flagrantly absurd. For Mr. Leonard Outram, not being a Lieut. R.N., but a mere irresponsible playwright, has given reins to his fancy, and devised a truly amazing Royal Navy of his own. In Mr. Outram's Navy there ought to be an Admiralty regulation enjoining captains, especially if they be young and good-looking, to search the ship's boilers before getting up steam (as the vaults of St. Stephen's are searched before the meeting of Parliament) lest there should be a few love-lorn damsels concealed in their murky recesses. A sort of pound, too, or gynæceum, ought to be provided for female stow-aways, under the care of an experienced chaperon; and it would not be amiss were a ritual prescribed for the disposal of any heroine who might elude all reasonable vigilance and succeed (as Mr. Outram's very nearly does) in getting boiled. Furthermore, precautions should be laid down for the exclusion of the villainess from the chart-room—a point on which the unaided intelligence of the Captain is not to be trusted. Indeed, the one thing that all the officers of H.M.S. *Watteau* can be trusted to display in time of need is

rank imbecility. There is not a more pitiful part in the records of melodrama than that of the gallant Captain who is always being discovered with the villainess's arms round his neck, in the act of saying, "Unhand mē, or I scream!"

Mr. Outram's fable, in short, is unique in its extravagance. Sir Augustus Harris and Mr. Cecil Raleigh strove to conceal their mortification under a mask of pallid impassivity; but already in the opening bull-fight they must have felt themselves out-done, while the parboiled heroine left their most daring inventions hopelessly in the shade. And Mr. Outram held the stage all the time; Stuart Gordon, Lieut. R.N., could scarcely get a word in edgewise. No doubt he looked to the correctness of the uniforms; but that only served to emphasise the incorrectness of their wearers' conduct. The scenery was excellent; indeed Mr. Hemsley's "Bull Ring at Algeciras" was the most successful instance I ever saw of the blending of real people in the foreground into a painted background. The acting, too, was all that was required. Miss Laura Graves as the heroine was *jolie à croquer* if not *à griller*; Mrs. Raleigh made a picturesque villainess, and Mr. Edward O'Neill a diabolical villain; while Messrs. Alfred Bucklaw and William Rignold did their best to "embrace all the finest attributes of a man," and to prove that "there isn't a straighter fellow on the world's books than a man

in the Royal Navy." These sentiments were received with curious apathy by the audience. They did not even applaud the retort of the officer to the lady who says, "I don't like those great ugly battleships"—"No more do England's enemies!" But there was one line which almost stirred us to open protest. "Life aboard Her Majesty's ships," says the navigating lieutenant, "is not all buffoonery, as you seem to think." This was adding insult to injury; for it was the authors that seemed to think so, and no one else.

XIII.

"THE STAR OF INDIA."

8th April.

A LINGERING superstition to the effect that a play-house situated in Oxford Street is necessarily a West-end theatre lured me to the Princess's on Saturday evening, to see a new drama by Messrs. G. R. Sims and Arthur Shirley, entitled *The Star of India*.* On the whole, I cannot say that the evening was wasted. It is convenient to have a chance, now and then, of studying the theatrical tastes of the Gorgeous East without the trouble of actually going there. But I am sure you will not insist on my keeping up the fiction

* April 4—May 16.

that everything which happens to be produced to the westward of Chancery Lane is a subject for serious criticism. *The Star of India* is not essentially foolisher than most plays of its class; but it is huddled together with an amazing slovenliness, and it lacks the external and spectacular attractions which now and then relieve the tedium of melodrama at Drury Lane and the Adelphi. The authors themselves seemed unable to work up any interest in the thing; there was no conviction in their heroics, no enjoyment in their buffoonery. They had strung together a bewildering plot, with no fewer than three villains careering through it; yet from this maximum of iniquity they extracted a vanishing minimum of effect. The situations in which there was any sort of thrill, even of the cheapest order, were quite extraneous to the plot. In a word, the authors did not even show reasonable care or ingenuity in obeying the rules of their childish game. What chiefly distressed me was that one of the villains, in whom I delighted beyond measure, was killed at the end of the second act. He had not appeared until the beginning of that act, and I had just learnt to love him, when he was cut off in the flower of his age. But his charm was in nowise due to the authors; their part in him was commonplace enough. It was the actor, Mr. Walter Beaumont, who won my heart. This gentleman possesses an incomparable breadth and breeziness of style; he can put a

quite preternatural emphasis and resonance into the most ordinary words; and when he takes the stage in three strides, he carries you back, as though with seven-league boots, to the palmy days of Astley's, the Surrey, and the "Vic." In all seriousness, I commend Mr. Beaumont to any manager who wants to mount a nautical drama of the good old school. The spirit of the late T. P. Cooke is certainly strong in him. If only they could have killed the hero instead, in the second act, or even earlier! Mr. Clifton Alderson, who played the part, bore a certain resemblance to Mr. Charles Warner, both in countenance and in style, and achieved a feat which, beforehand, I should have declared impossible—that of making me wish that Mr. Warner were in his place. The heroine was pleasantly and intelligently played by Miss Hettie Chattell, and Mr. Robert Pateman, as an Oriental villain, was vigorous and effective, as he always is. The really memorable feature of the evening, however, was the performance of "Oriana, a maid-of-all-work," by Miss Sydney Fairbrother. The conventional slavey of farce is nearly always well acted. Since Miss Cicely Richards played Belinda in *Our Boys*, that peculiarly English variety of soubrette has never lacked competent representatives. But there was an original and individual strain of humour in Miss Fairbrother's Oriana which quite distinguished it from the conventional slavey. If she has any seriousness

behind her curiously self-possessed, freakish humour, this young lady ought to make her mark as a comedian.

As the theatre is run at "popular prices," we must not look too curiously into the mounting. A great deal of villainous saltpetre was lavished on the Manipur scenes, which certainly had an extremely dangerous appearance, and gave one (in the front row of the stalls) quite the sensation of heading a forlorn hope. They would be more plausible if the mechanists could somehow synchronise the entrance and the explosion of their bombs. As a rule the shells exploded several seconds before the appearance of the breaches in the wall through which they were supposed to have entered. The authors had not disdained to borrow from *The New Magdalen* the famous idea of the watchword, "Pass the English lady!" receding from sentry to sentry, until it died away in the distance; but in Wilkie Collins's play the point of the thing was that the English lady who was supposed to be passing the lines was in reality lying dead (to all appearance) on the stage. Messrs. Sims and Shirley, then, have annexed the idea but not the effect. On the other hand, the poisoned dagger is entirely of their own invention, and they ought to patent it. This lethal instrument is apparently constructed on the principle of the fountain-pen—you give it a little shake and a drop of venom exudes from the point.

Even before the days of the stylograph certain pens are reported to have possessed this peculiarity; but the Inexhaustible Reservoir Stiletto is a priceless novelty.

XIV.

"KING HENRY IV." ON THE STAGE.

An Open Letter to Mr. Beerbohm Tree.

Daily Chronicle, 14th April.

SIR,—To all playgoers who cherish any lingering hope of one day seeing the English stage give some approach to an adequate interpretation of Shakespeare's genius, in its full majesty and universality, the news of your projected revival of *King Henry IV.* (Part I.) must have brought, not only pleasure, but a positive sense of relief. We had been threatened with the production of a medley compounded from the two parts of *Henry IV.* by the ingenious Mr. Daly, in which Prince Henry, the hero of Shrewsbury and of Agincourt, who plays Achilles to Hotspur's Hector, and embodies for all time Shakespeare's conception of martial virility, was to be performed by a charming actress, whose genius lies precisely in the wealth of her exuberant womanhood. Some foolish affectation of "keeping an open mind" prevented me, and no

doubt other critics as well, from formally protesting against this outrage upon art and common sense; but now that you, sir, have made practical protest in the most effective way, I cannot refrain from expressing, as aforesaid, my pleasure and my relief. I am sure you agree with me that this is not a point on which we can, or ought to, "keep an open mind." No one doubts, of course, that Mr. Daly's nimble scissors can carve an amusing entertainment out of the two parts of *Henry IV*. In the same way he might cut up two pieces of rare Gobelins, and make an effective patchwork-quilt of them. But what we want is Shakespeare's tapestry, not Mr. Daly's patchwork. The day is long past when Shakespeare was regarded as a mere quarry of raw material, to be worked up as their fancy dictated by even the Drydens, Cibbers, and Garricks, not to mention the Tates and Dalys, of the theatre. As for the proposed feminine Hotspur-slayer, such monstrosities have now and then been tolerated for a single night, usually a benefit-night, when, by long prescription, any device was held legitimate that could tickle public curiosity. Thus Mrs. Siddons, in her early years, would sometimes appear as Hamlet. Such a travesty can never be artistic or desirable; but we must remember that there is a strain of the woman in Hamlet, while in Mrs. Siddons, perhaps, there may have been a dash of the man. There is less excuse, to my thinking, for Miss Charlotte

Cushman's Romeo. The fact that Miss Cushman was not a woman of normal feminine temperament, though it may have made her performance better in itself, seems to emphasise the repulsiveness of the idea. But there are none of these excuses or palliations for Mr. Daly's happy thought of thrusting Miss Rehan into the part of Prince Hal. There is nothing of the woman in the character, less than nothing of the man in the actress. History mentions, with a blush, at least one female Falstaff; if Miss Rehan cannot find scope for her genius in that half—one may almost say that better half—of the world's drama which belongs to her sex, she might just as well attempt Falstaff as Prince Hal.

Your performances, sir, if they do not lead to the indefinite adjournment of Mr. Daly's scheme, will at least put it out of countenance by placing before the public, in its integrity, the incomparable masterpiece which he proposes, or proposed, to mutilate. "This is the play," says Dr. Georg Brandes in his work on Shakespeare, "in which the poet, at the age of thirty-three, stands for the first time on the very pinnacle of his greatness. Its wealth of character, of wit, of genius has never been surpassed. Its dramatic structure is somewhat loose; but it is none the less one of the consummate achievements of the world's literature, at once heroic and burlesque, thrilling and side-splitting. And these contrasted

elements are not, as in Victor Hugo's dramas, brought into hard-and-fast rhetorical antithesis, but move and mingle with all the freedom of life."

"In its integrity," I say, not for a moment doubting that it is your intention to produce the play unshorn and unmangled. You are too keenly alive to the tendencies of the time to dream of borrowing Mr. Daly's scissors. You cannot but be aware that there is among the intelligent public a growing dissatisfaction with the way in which Shakespeare's text has of late years been recklessly sacrificed to the supposed necessity for elaborate "sets" on the one hand, and, on the other hand, to the modern actor's indolent practice of substituting cheap "business" for thoughtful and forceful diction. Hence we have societies actively endeavouring to restore the old arras-hung Elizabethan stage, and to dispense altogether with archæology and scenic decoration. This jumping from abuse to disuse seems to me, as no doubt it does to you, excessive and uncalled-for. What we want, and what we confidently look for at the Haymarket, is unobtrusively appropriate decoration and a reverent treatment of the text, lightening it only of those passages which have become obsolete, and would be either offensive to a modern audience or unintelligible without a commentary.

The first part of *Henry IV.* is a play of quite moderate length. Somewhat longer than the general

run of the comedies, it is much shorter than *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *Lear*, and *Richard III*. It can be recited, every word of it, slowly and clearly, in two hours and twenty-three minutes. A certain time must of course be allowed for legitimate "business," fighting and so forth; but, on the other hand, the excision of obsolete passages reduces the time of recitation by at least sixteen minutes. Since, then, a reasonable acting version of the play can be recited in two hours seven minutes, it follows that we can allow twenty-three minutes for "business," and still get the whole performance into two hours and a half. Half-an-hour for entr'actes—four entr'actes averaging seven minutes apiece—ought to be more than sufficient; so that the curtain could rise at half-past two and fall at half-past five. Indeed I have no doubt that this is an outside estimate; when the piece settles down and everything goes quite smoothly, you should be able easily to get the curtain down by a quarter past five. *Trilby* does not begin till half-past eight, so you would have an interval of three hours and a quarter between Falstaff and Svengali. How you can undertake such work, from which the great actors of the past would have shrunk appalled, is a mystery to me; but I am sure that, having undertaken it, you are not the man to scamp it.

As to the permissible "cuts," the principle stated above cannot but command your approval; and there

is not, in this play, any serious difficulty in applying it. The one passage as to which I should hesitate for a moment is that between Prince Hal, Poins and the drawer, Francis, at the beginning of Act II., Sc. 4. It is a piece of local (and very probably personal) caricature, which has long ago lost all its relevance, and become, so to speak, mere abstract buffoonery. It is retained, I observe, in all stage versions, and, if there is time for it, so much the better; but I would not sacrifice a line in any other portion of the play in order to preserve it. Again, in Act III., Sc. 1, from "re-enter Glendower with the ladies" onward, we cannot recapture the Elizabethans' delight in the Welsh gibberish and "Welsh song sung by Lady Mortimer," for the sake of which the scene exists. The theatre is not the place for studies in the archæology of humour. On the same principle, even those passages of the tavern scenes which require a glossary and copious foot-notes to give them any meaning—perhaps some sixty to eighty lines in all—may quite well go by the board. To approach a popular audience in a spirit of pedantry, and insist on their laughing at things they do not understand because their forefathers understood and laughed at them three hundred years ago, would be to do Shakespeare and the stage a grave disservice. Humour that has "gone dead" may be laboriously resuscitated in the study. It is quite out of place on the stage, especially

in a play so replete as *Henry IV.* with humour that can never die.

Turning from the comic to the historical scenes, we find, as I am sure you will agree, next to nothing that can be called obsolete. The blank verse of this play shows Shakespeare at his very best as a popular dramatist. It is resonant, rapid, and perspicuous. His style is not so overpacked with meaning as it sometimes became in later plays. Apart from the before-mentioned Welsh scene, and the clearly superfluous Act IV., Sc. 4, there are, to my thinking, only some fifty blank-verse lines in the whole play that can with any show of reason be omitted. Judge of my astonishment when I took down the "Henry Irving Shakespeare," in which excisions supposed to have been made, or sanctioned, by Sir Henry Irving are indicated by brackets, and found that from one scene alone, the noble and moving reconciliation between the King and the Prince of Wales (Act III., Sc. 2), Sir Henry proposed to cut out no fewer than seventy-five lines—just three-sevenths of the whole! I am sorry to add that even John Philip Kemble, that hero of the "palmy days," cut fifty-eight lines of this scene; but then Kemble played Cibber's Richard and Tate's Lear, and proved himself in many other cases a light-hearted mutilator of Shakespeare. Besides, Hotspur was Kemble's part, and Hotspur is not on in this scene. At Manchester, the other day, I heard

the scene spoken with scarcely any abbreviation by an excellent Henry IV. (Mr. S. A. Cookson) and a passable Prince of Wales, and I assure you, sir, its majestic movement gave not only to me, but to the whole crowded audience, a glow of pleasure and emotion which we could not possibly have received from the truncated and halting version, robbed of half its character and all its dignity, presented in the "Henry Irving Shakespeare." There are just four lines in the scene which (I would suggest) might with advantage be cut. Prince Henry has, near the beginning, an involved and (not to speak it profanely) somewhat formless period, which can with difficulty be spoken so as to make the meaning clear :—

Yet such extenuation let me beg,
As, in reproof of many tales devis'd
(*Which oft the ear of greatness needs must hear*)
By smiling pick-thanks and base newsmongers,
I may, for some things true, wherein my youth
Hath faulty wander'd and irregular,
Find pardon on my true submission.

Here the italicised parenthesis might, I think, be dispensed with, for the sake of perspicuity. Again, towards the end of the scene, the Prince says :—

I will redeem all this on Percy's head,
And, in the closing of some glorious day,
Be bold to tell you that I am your son ;
When I will wear a garment all of blood,

*And stain my favours in a bloody mask,
Which, wash'd away, shall scour my shame with it:*
And that shall be the day, whene'er it lights,
That this same child of honour and renown,
This gallant Hotspur, this all-praised knight,
And your unthought-of Harry, chance to meet.

The three lines here italicised seem almost like a survival from some early and Marlowesque form of the play, and, at any rate, serve merely to retard and weaken the movement of the speech. These two excisions, then, seem to me permissible; for the rest, there is not a line of this glorious scene that can be sacrificed without obvious loss.

We shall never recover the true art of making Shakespeare live on the stage until our actors get over that *short-windedness* which causes them to shrink from a speech of any length. The actor who has neither the breath to carry him through a rotund and flowing period, nor the elocutionary skill to give variety to a long speech, *nuancing* it, if I may say so, by means of his voice alone, at once concludes that any tirade of more than three lines must of necessity bore the public, and hastens either to cut it down or to cut it up with pauses, and suspensions, and nods and becks and wreathèd smiles, and "new readings," and "suggestive business." Half the subtleties and profundities which modern actors have embroidered upon Shakespeare are mere devices to mask their

shortness of breath and lack of physical energy. It is this slackening of the movement, this retardation of the *tempo* which Shakespeare so unmistakably indicates, that not only involves sweeping abbreviations of the text, but, in too many cases, renders what is left of it intolerably tedious. Passages meant to be taken at a hand gallop, and irresistibly stirring and beautiful when so treated, are painfully "negotiated" in fits and starts, as though the poet had challenged the actor to a sort of obstacle-race. A little girl stumbling through a new "piece" on the piano does no more injustice to the composer than is done by some of our most admired performers to the music of Shakespeare's verse. What wonder that, so maltreated, it should seem tedious! But in *Henry IV.*, as I need not point out to you, there is no shadow of excuse for thus subtilising out of existence the splendid and impetuous prosody which thrills like a trumpet-blast through the great scenes. Here is no room, no pretext, for "illustrative business" or "psychological suggestion." If the actor cannot swim strongly and confidently down the current of Shakespeare's iambics, let him not attempt to wade and dabble in them, a spectacle for gods and men!

I am delighted to learn, sir, that you have taken counsel with Mr. Louis Calvert, whose spirited revival of *Henry IV.* at Manchester showed how much can be done by energy and intelligence, though the

Irving cut these admirable lines of Worcester's (Act V., Sc. 2):—

Suspicion all our lives shall be stuck full of eyes ;
For treason is but trusted like the fox,
Who, ne'er so tame, so cherish'd, and lock'd up,
Will have a wild trick of his ancestors.
Look how we can, or sad, or merrily,
Interpretation will misquote our looks ;
And we shall feed like oxen at the stall,
The better cherish'd, still the nearer death.

Surely you feel, sir, as I do, that the actor who cannot make these lines interesting to his audience simply proclaims himself incompetent. Again, Kemble and Sir Henry Irving agree in cutting these speeches of the Douglas, when Hotspur tells him that he has killed, not the King, but Sir Walter Blunt in the King's armour :—

DOUG. A fool go with thy soul, whither it goes !
A borrow'd title hast thou bought too dear :
Why didst thou tell me that thou wert a king ?

HOT. The king hath many marching in his coats.

DOUG. Now, by my sword, I will kill all his coats ;
I'll murder all his wardrobe, piece by piece,
Until I meet the king.

I venture to say, sir, that there is no English audience "so tame, so cherish'd, and lock'd up," but will show "a wild trick of its ancestors," and thrill to the splendid savagery of this speech.

But it is needless to multiply instances of the havoc wrought by timorous and unappreciative managers in the text of Shakespeare. For Kemble, indeed, the excuse may be alleged that it was the custom of his time to get a farce and a melodrama or pantomime into the same bill with a five-act tragedy. To you, sir, we look confidently for better things. The very fact of your voluntarily facing so great a task, under existing circumstances, is a proof of high artistic ambition. While the public is still hypnotised by Svengali, it would doubtless have paid you better simply to "hold them with your glittering eye," and make no movement beyond that of raking in their golden tribute. Such inaction was abhorrent to your soul. Seeing an opportunity of doing a fine thing, you determined to do it at all hazards, and, I doubt not, to do it finely. In the name of all who have any care or hope for our national drama, I wish you good inspiration and good luck.—I am, dear sir, yours faithfully,

WILLIAM ARCHER.

LONDON, *April 11.*

An Open Letter to Mr. William Archer.

Daily Chronicle, 21st April.

SIR,—I have read with deep interest the letter you have addressed to me through the columns of *The Daily Chronicle* of the 14th inst., and I thank you

for your generous tribute, and your sympathetic counsel. In the views you express in regard to the ideal production of *Henry IV.*, I recognise the scholar and the enthusiast. Indeed, if there be any divergence in my mind from the views expressed by you, it is perhaps because experience teaches me that a theatrical audience is not exclusively composed of scholars and enthusiasts. In the main I am entirely with you in holding that a work of this dignity needs no journeyman tinkering, for to seek to gild its refined gold with theatrical tinsel would be to let off fireworks while the sun is shining. I cannot, however, agree with your calculation as to the time occupied in representation. Were I to produce the play in the shape you suggest (even allowing it to be cast in four acts instead of five), it would occupy considerably over three hours and a half, and, as you yourself admit, the time of such representation should not exceed three hours. Even at Manchester, where the waits were short, the play lasted three hours and a quarter.

Now, as to "cuts"; I agree with you as to the advisability of preserving all that is essential—and this play is singularly free from redundancy of dialogue. The scene at the Archbishop of York's house seems to me, as it seems to you, superfluous, and so (for dramatic purposes) does the scene of the carriers at the beginning of Act II. But I cannot

share your view that the scene between Prince Hal, Poins, and Francis (Act II., Sc. 4) should be eliminated, for, although it may border in its boisterous comedy on what you call "abstract buffoonery," it appears to me, from a stage point of view, so effective that its omission would be a serious loss to the lighter side of the play; and what is equally important, the scene serves as a prologue to the Falstaff episodes that follow. As to your advocacy of the elimination of Act III., Sc. 1, from "Re-enter Glendower with the ladies" onward, again I am more conservative than you yourself, and I would be loth to sacrifice a scene which strikes me personally as full of charm and beauty—witness Glendower's translation of his daughter's Welsh speech to her lover :—

She bids you

Upon the wanton rushes lay you down,
And rest your gentle head upon her lap,
And she will sing the song that pleaseth you,
And on your eyelids crown the god of sleep,
Charming your blood with pleasing heaviness :
Making such difference 'twixt wake and sleep
As is the difference betwixt day and night,
The hour before the heavenly-harnessed team
Begins his golden progress in the east.

I confess that, in contemplating this production, I did so in the first instance largely for my own pleasure (a pleasure in which I hope you will share), and

I am sure, therefore, you will not take it amiss if I indulge myself by retaining this scene, more especially as I believe it will please the better half of our *matinée* audiences—I mean the ladies. I would restore the greater part of this scene of love and song, even at the sacrifice of some of the dialogue of the Falstaff scenes, and of the sometimes boastful rhetoric in the several battle-scenes. But I agree with you that in the historical scenes it is desirable to avoid the ravages of the blue pencil, which I am inclined to think has been somewhat too freely applied in other versions. You point out that in the Irving Shakespeare seventy-five lines are cut in the reconciliation scene between the King and the Prince of Wales (Act III., Sc. 2). In Phelps's version, which, through the courtesy of Mr. Charles Warner, lies before me, I notice forty-four lines of this scene are cut, and in John Philip Kemble's version, fifty-eight lines are cut. In my version only sixteen lines of this scene are deleted. Indeed, in this and other scenes I have restored many of the lines omitted by Mr. Calvert in his admirable and spirited production at Manchester.

The following lines, quoted by you as being omitted in other versions, have been restored in the forthcoming version, viz. :—

Suspicion all our lives shall be stuck full of eyes ;
For treason is but trusted like the fox,

Who, ne'er so tame, so cherish'd, and lock'd up,
Will have a wild trick of his ancestors,—etc.

We also restore the following lines:—

DOUGLAS. A fool go with thy soul, whither it goes !
A borrow'd title hast thou bought too dear :
Why didst thou tell me that thou wert a king ?
HOTSPUR. The king hath many marching in his coats.
DOUGLAS. Now, by my sword, I will kill all his coats ;
I'll murder all his wardrobe, piece by piece,
Until I meet the king.

I have treated your suggestions *seriatim*.

When I first contemplated this production I did so chiefly as an artistic endeavour—but I confess that the hope of popular success is not absent from my mind. In presenting a Shakespearian play it is something to win the approval of connoisseurs—it is a yet greater achievement, I think, to present it in such a way as to commend it to the acceptance of the great public, and if we are to cultivate a more widespread taste for such works, our first care must be not to bore our audience.

One reason why the public is shy of witnessing such plays is, as you point out, because their treatment is sometimes unnecessarily dull. If there are passages which in representation seem calculated to retard the swift action of the three hours' traffic, those who stickle for the retention of every word may always find

consolation in reading the omitted passages in the study.

Beneath the familiar smile of your goodwill I cannot help detecting the austere regard of your critical control. Should our treatment of the play not altogether find favour in your eyes, owing to a regard for what I conceive to be the exigencies of the modern stage, I shall be none the less sensible of the service you have rendered in drawing public attention to the splendid possibilities of this masterpiece.—I remain, dear sir, yours faithfully,

HERBERT BEERBOHM TREE.

April 20.

A Brief Rejoinder to Mr. Beerbohm Tree.

Daily Chronicle, 22nd April.

SIR,—You have, of course, my fullest sympathy in retaining the conclusion of Act III., Sc. 1, if your doing so does not involve the sacrifice of some more vital scene or passage. I should be content to see it dropped, because it is clearly an inessential interlude, designed to afford an opportunity for the singing boy-comedian who played Lady Mortimer; but I am still better content to see it retained. Similarly, as to the Francis episode—it has entirely lost the meaning and relevancy which it had for Shakespeare's con-

temporaries, and might, therefore, be sacrificed without remorse; but it belongs to the order of "comic business," which may always be trusted to make an audience laugh, and I can therefore well understand your clinging to it, if only you do not reject for its sake something of infinitely greater value. The carrier scene is an inimitable piece of local colour, and, lightened of a few obsolete expressions, might be of the greatest use in lending to the whole Gads-hill episode a sensation of open-air reality. This, however, is a comparatively trifling matter. If the carriers must go overboard, they must. I shall miss them far less than those sixteen lines in the scene between the King and the Prince of Wales. Though your scene will be better than Phelps's by twenty-eight lines, than Kemble's by forty-two lines, and than Sir Henry Irving's by fifty-nine lines, it will be by at least twelve lines worse than Shakespeare's.

But this is neither the place nor the time for the discussion of details. I am delighted—though of course I expected no less—by your cordial acceptance of the principle I tried to enunciate. On one point alone you do not seem quite to have grasped my meaning. You say that if you produced the play in the shape I suggested, it would occupy "considerably over three hours and a half." If it did—and here lies the very gist of my argument—that fact alone

would sufficiently prove that the method of production was somehow defective. It would prove that (1) the scenery was too elaborate and unwieldy; or that (2) the "business" was needlessly protracted; or that (3) the actors' delivery was slow, hesitating, and spasmodic. Most probably all three causes would be found to combine in dragging out the performance. Believe me, sir, the manager who would do full justice to the first part of *Henry IV.* must begin by saying to himself, "If we cannot get (practically) the whole of this play into two hours and a half, with another half-hour for entr'actes, there is something amiss in our treatment of it, and we must e'en work at it till we *can!*"

Finally, let me beg you to disabuse your mind of the idea that I approach this question as a "scholar and enthusiast." I have no pretension to either character. I am simply a playgoer, desirous, like other playgoers, of obtaining as much enjoyment as possible in the theatre; and I have found by experience that Shakespeare unadulterated gives not only to me, but to all intelligent playgoers, a greater sum of pleasure than Shakespeare gashed and garbled to suit the voiceless actor or the tasteless stage-manager. The "scholar and enthusiast" can enjoy his Shakespeare in the study. It is my aim, as I am sure it is yours, to secure for the creator of Hotspur, Falstaff, and Prince Hal that broad-based and enduring popularity on the stage of his native country which

by right belongs to him.—Believe me, dear sir, yours
faithfully,

WILLIAM ARCHER.

LONDON, *April 21.*

XV.

“THE SIN OF ST. HULDA”—“A MOTHER OF THREE.”

15th April.

MR. STUART OGILVIE, author of *The Sin of St. Hulda*, at the Shaftesbury,* has been reproached—or credited—with a desire to exploit the existing craze for so-called “religious drama.” This is all nonsense. The play must have been conceived, and was probably written, long before the craze set in. It is possible that the Shaftesbury management may have fancied that in putting it on at this moment they were following the set of the popular current; but in that case they were mistaken. *The Sin of St. Hulda* is not a “religious drama” at all, in the accepted sense of the term. It is neither pretentious, nor illiterate, nor brutal. It does not seek to sanctify, by a copious aspersion of religious phraseology, a crude and meretricious spectacle, making brazen appeal to every inartistic instinct in the vulgar breast. It is not a compound of the tract and the penny dreadful.

* April 9—25.

If Mr. Ogilvie had indeed any thought of playing upon clerical simplicity and making bishops his bill-stickers and archdeacons his sandwich-men, he has not gone the right way about it. There is nothing either sensual or sanctimonious in *The Sin of Saint Hulda*. It does not even minister to the narrow egotism of a sect. True, the conflict is nominally between Catholicism and Protestantism, and it is the Protestantism, so called, that wins the day. But the names could be exchanged with scarcely the change of another word. There is not a single allusion, complimentary or otherwise, to any doctrine or practice of either Church. It does not even appear that the Catholics, who are dominant at the outset, persecute very ferociously. The theology of "St. Hulda" is of the simplest description. It consists in distinguishing between "belief," by which she seems to mean dogma, and "faith," which apparently denotes a sort of Browningsque optimism, or confidence in what Stevenson calls "the ultimate decency of things."

"Belief

Is but the body of our thought, and mortal.

Faith is the soul, th' immortal lambent link

Between Life's meaning and Death's mystery."

I am not familiar with the tenets of Martin Luther, but I can scarcely think they were quite so undogmatic as this. I seem to remember something about

his nailing certain theses to a church-door—or did he tear them down? I know he threw an inkstand at the Devil, thus tacitly confessing, perhaps, a certain poverty of dialectical resource; but the incident throws no light upon the doctrine to be expected from a disciple of his. The fact is, St. Hulda is no more a Lutheran than she is an Esoteric Buddhist—rather less, perhaps. Mr. Ogilvie has made the religious conflict in his play entirely abstract. What he set out to do was to depict a woman of high spiritual fervour and magnetism, suffering under the consciousness that she has not always been the saint she is supposed to be. Such a woman could find full scope for her eloquence and courage only in a period of religious ferment and persecution; so that, in casting about for a picturesque background for his action, Mr. Ogilvie found the time of the Reformation almost forced upon him. His heroine, too, was bound to belong to the innovating and heretical party. But Mr. Ogilvie cared nothing for Trojan or Tyrian, Catholic or Reformer. The details of their doctrines, the merits of their respective positions, gave him no concern. It was sufficient for his artistic purpose that Hulda should be passionately devoted to some faith or other, and should incur danger in preaching it. If he had been wise in his generation, he would have represented the Protestants as angels of light, given us crude and garish pictures

of Catholic hypocrisy, corruption, and vice, and made Otho produce a thumbscrew on the smallest provocation and keep a rack always handy in the next room. Probably, too, he would have wound up with an *auto-da-fé*, and shown St. Hulda shrieking behind a screen of spirit-flames as the curtain fell. He has neglected all these opportunities. He has not offered a "spicy" concoction of cruelty and impropriety to the class which, having no palate for the wine of art, conceives the theatre as a sort of flaunting grog-shop where the vitriol of physical sensation is always on tap. He has not thrilled the stage-struck cleric with that sense of sanctified wickedness which stimulates eloquence and begets the puff ecclesiastic. He has made no attempt to combine the pose of Crummles with the snuffle of Chadband. In a word, he has not written a "religious drama."

As a pure work of art, then,—for that is what it aims at being,—Mr. Ogilvie's romance presents three elements for consideration: plot, ethic, and style. Of character it contains little or nothing; that is to say, its characters are ideal personages with no more individuality than is strictly necessary for working out the fable.

Looking first at the mere action, apart from its meanings, one cannot but find it weak in two ways. In the first place, it does not sweep onwards with steadily gathering momentum, but proceeds in a

series of jerks and pauses; in the second place, the external machinery is left too vague: we know so little of the political forces which shape the course of events that we are never quite clear as to what, and how serious, are the issues at stake. The first act is stirring and picturesque, but, instead of taking us into the heart of the action, it turns out to be a mere prologue. We see a lurid storm-cloud gathering over Hulda's head, and are duly thrilled with boding anticipation; but, behold! when the second act opens, we find that it has entirely blown over, that six months of halcyon weather have elapsed, and that the storm is now only beginning to draw up afresh on the horizon. Then, when it looms aloft again, we somehow cannot feel that any very devastating thunderbolt is to be expected from it. Prince Otho, for all his tenebrous airs, is but a half-hearted inquisitor. We do not know what force he has at command, so that we cannot tell how much we ought to tremble for Hulda's safety; but as it appears that a vote of the town council of Mindenburg is sufficient to checkmate him and all his halberdiers, we feel, on the whole, that there is no great cause for alarm. Thus the second and third acts, up to the Rathhaus scene, are quite devoid of excitement. We have no genuine sense of persecution and peril in the air. I fancy Mr. Ogilvie has made a mistake in not placing his action more definitely, and appeal-

ing in some measure to our knowledge, however vague, of a given historical period. If, for instance, he had laid his scene in the Netherlands, and replaced "Otho, Prince of Halberstadt" by the Duke of Alva, or even an emissary of Alva's, the mere name would have brought with it a sensation, which in fact was quite absent, of menace and dread. Again, the scene of Hulda's "splendid mendacity," picturesque and stirring in itself, was discounted by our inability to realise the importance of the crisis. We were *told* that the whole fate of the Reformation movement depended on her perjuring herself, but we were not made to *feel* it. All we knew was that she had received a letter from some one we had never heard of, in the play or out of it, and that Frieke, her confidant (not Hulda herself), interpreted this letter as binding her to keep her secret at all hazards. We lacked the data, in fact, for forming any judgment, or even any decided wish, one way or the other. Then the situation, with all its external effectiveness, did not carry the interest forward. We could not guess, however dimly, what was to follow; and the worst of it was that we did not greatly care. In brief, the author had not succeeded in linking the incidents of his romance in any necessary sequence, and had not made real to us the external forces conditioning it. We found it impossible, therefore, to take any very breathless interest in it.

Nor did the moral of the fable appeal very strongly to our sympathies. Perhaps Mr. Ogilvie may disclaim any definite moral purpose; but, whether he intended it or not, a certain doctrine does quite clearly disengage itself from the story. It is that a woman who has "sinned" may rehabilitate herself to the point of becoming a potent influence for good upon the lives of others—nay, a spiritual force of the highest order,—but only on condition of entirely renouncing personal happiness, and holding herself, as it were, immured and cloistered in the consciousness of her bygone frailty. Now this is a mere empty sentimentalism, in which, I am sure, Mr. Ogilvie does not really believe. He simply accepts it as a "poetical" idea, and therefore in harmony with his romantic theme. That Hulda might herself cherish some such superstition is probable enough; but Providence, according to Mr. Ogilvie, endorses it by making her die of heart disease at the moment when she might otherwise have faltered in her expiatory resolve. If it were the consequences of her frailty—the betrayal and death of her father and brother—that weighed upon her mind, and made her feel herself an outcast from earthly joys, one could better understand her position. But this seems to trouble her comparatively little; it is the mere fact of her "sin" that raises an insurmountable barrier between her and her lover. That is the ethical

upshot of the story, and it smacks, I think, of sentimental superficiality, not to say insincerity.

In the style, as in the conception, of the drama, there is a good deal of poetic feeling, and even flashes of a certain felicity, but no sustained accomplishment. Mr. Ogilvie can now and then write a sonorous line, but he cannot build up a strong and well-knit period. His images are apt to be incongruous, and his vocabulary can only be called motley. The "lambent link," quoted above, is a trifle ominous. The following passage, in a speech not otherwise ill-written, shows the uncertainty of Mr. Ogilvie's taste:

" And if it has been mine to holpen (!) some,
If from the Devil's dunghill I have snatched
One single seed of lost humanity,
To store it with the stars in Heaven's loft
Of golden granary, I am content."

Here, again, is a quaint expression for St. Hulda to use :

" Oh ! but this cank'ring sense of secrecy,
Of *flash* pretence, is eating out my heart."

As a rule Mr. Ogilvie keeps commendably clear of pseudo-Elizabethan jargon ; but now and then a frenzy of archaism seems to seize him, and he comes out with such weird sayings as this : "King Charles hath bestowed on me the richest province of the Rhine to have and to hold in perpetuity, *and to this*

hereditament I do appoint thee fief." In two cases at least Mr. Ogilvie borrows (no doubt unwittingly) from other dramatists. From Ibsen he takes his "harps in the air"; and from Dryden this speech of Hulda's: "He who gives us life is as the Captain setting the night-watch; we must not quit our post till we are called." What Dryden says is:

" But we, like sentries, are obliged to stand
In starless nights, and wait the appointed hour."

There is blank verse for you, if you like !

The play is lavishly and very tastefully mounted, and the stage-management of the Rathhaus scene is excellent. Miss Kate Rorke was delightful as Hulda. The sincerity in unreality which the part demands is quite in Miss Rorke's way. She spoke the lines admirably, and expressed to perfection the wistful other-worldliness of the character. Mr. Lewis Waller was good as the hero—better than his part—and Mr. Charles Cartwright as the villain carried to excess his feline mannerism and his way of gliding from one sentence to another in total disregard of punctuation. I was horribly disappointed when he and Mr. Waller "fought off." Nothing less than Otho's head in a charger would have satisfied my lust of blood. Mr. Kemble's Burgomaster was a rich piece of comedy, and Miss Annie Webster was very pleasant as Frieke.

I confess to having laughed a good deal at *A*

Mother of Three, by Miss Clo Graves, at the Comedy;* and I further confess to feeling heartily ashamed of myself for so doing. The humour of the farce is of that mock-valentine order which is my aversion; there is no semblance of common-sense in the disguise from which the imbroglio springs; the action is kept going only by dint of making all the characters consistently behave like lunatics; and the symmetrical evolutions of the three girls, who are stage-managed like a comic-opera chorus, got very much upon my nerves. Nevertheless there is a sort of crude comicality in a good deal of the dialogue and business which vastly delighted the audience, and now and then got hold of me in spite of myself. If it be the humorist's supreme triumph to wring a smile from an unwilling auditor (and a Scotchman to boot), Miss Graves may plume herself on having achieved that feat. Unwilling I certainly was; for that sort of skirting and flirting round impropriety of which nine-tenths of the fun consisted has always seemed to me the lowest form of humour. Miss Fanny Brough played her uncomfortable "breeches part" with what may be called a spirited embarrassment, and was ably seconded by Mr. Cyril Maude, Miss Rose Leclercq, Miss Esmé Beringer, and Miss Annie Goward.

* April 8—June 6. Reproduced June 22—July 4.

XVI.

"BIARRITZ."

22nd April.

It is, on the whole, a generous instinct which prompts English audiences to applaud the actors even in a play which has displeased them. The chances are that the actors have done their best with their material, and it would be brutal to revenge on them the weariness or irritation for which the author is really responsible. There are cases, of course, in which the actors have misrepresented the author, and are the true culprits; but the audience does not exist, at any rate in England, which is collectively capable of such nice discrimination. It will be long before we see an author summoned before the curtain and consoled with loud applause for the maltreatment of his work, while the guilty actors are either received with groans or frigidly ignored. And the instances are very rare in which even abstract justice would thus be satisfied. An audience has to utter its emotions in a makeshift language of two terms, applause and hisses—or three, if we include a significant silence. It cannot be expected to deal out justice with a nicety of apportionment which even professional critics, with the whole English language and a liberal supplement of French at their command, do not seem

always to attain. The public, then, instinctively acquires a habit of employing its limited vocabulary in such a way as to do substantial justice in the great majority of cases; and the instinct which forbids it, except on extreme provocation, to vent its displeasure upon the actors, is not only courteous, but, in the main, equitable. Even where the acting is alone in question, as in performances of the classic drama, I should be the last to recommend a return to the savage theatrical manners of last century. Nowadays, silence is a quite sufficient mark of disapprobation for the worst that an actor, simply *as* an actor, is in the least likely to do. On the other hand, an audience is well within its rights in openly and vigorously repudiating a play by which it has been bored or offended. There is a great deal of exaggeration in the complaints we so often hear of the "brutality" of audiences in calling an author before the curtain only to hoot and jeer at him. It is the author's friends, or, at all events, those of the audience who have liked the play, who summon him before the curtain; those who have disliked it are equally justified in protesting against his appearance, and, if he nevertheless chooses to confront them, in maintaining their protest even to his face. No doubt it is unpleasant to stand and be hooted at; but the author has always the option of being, literally or figuratively, "not in the theatre." Not so the actor. He must be "in the theatre." He

has fought the fight with his own flesh and bone and nerve. Even when he comes forward to take a recall, he does so, in form at any rate, by the direction of the stage-manager. It is hard enough upon him to have to bear the brunt of disapproval called forth, not by his acting, but by the play. Therefore, I repeat, audiences are, as a rule, humanely and justly inspired in making the distinction quite unmistakable.

But there are cases in which our habit of patting the actor on the back while we shake our fists at the author results in very serious injustice. There are cases in which the distinction between actor and author is quite misleading, the actor having thrust himself willy-nilly upon the author in the character of an irresponsible collaborator. It ought to have been evident to the audience at the Prince of Wales's on the first night of *Biarritz** that the unblushing incoherence of the entertainment could not possibly be due to the nominal author. For my part, I needed no disclaimer from Mr. Jerome K. Jerome to assure me of this. It was as plain as a pikestaff that, after the first few scenes, scarcely a word of the written text was spoken, while the plot, which announced itself not unpromisingly, was irrecoverably lost in the maze of unmitigated clowning. The extravagance of *Biarritz*, in short, is not such as any playwright ever did, or ever could, conceive and write down in his

* April 11—June 20.

study, though his study were in Colney Hatch. The piece, as presented, had evidently grown on the stage, the written text serving as a mere nucleus for a monstrous accretion of gags, wheezes, disguises, parodies, irrelevant buffooneries of every description. I have not always been able to appreciate Mr. Jerome's work for the stage as highly as I should like to, but no one can suspect him of rank imbecility, sheer deliquescence of intellect. And even if there were any grounds for such a suspicion, one would still have to acquit him of the particular sort of imbecility which here ran riot. It was in no writer's brain that these tomfooleries were engendered. The mark of the comedian was over them all. Conception and execution evidently went hand in hand, as in the performance of an acrobat or juggler. Mr. Jerome could no more have written the play (if we must call it so) presented at the Prince of Wales's than he could write a "turn" for the Schäfer Troupe or Paul Cinquevalli. These things do not primarily exist in verbal form at all. They come into being in the shape of action, of business; but the business of the mime differs from that of the gymnast or the juggler in being accompanied with a certain amount of patter. In Mr. Arthur Roberts's patter some shreds of Mr. Jerome's dialogue may possibly have survived, by accident; but any one could see with half an eye that Mr. Roberts, in league with I know not what stage-

managers, mechanists, wig-makers and costumiers, had seized upon Mr. Jerome's libretto and incrusted it with such a mass of heterogeneous inventions, that the original fabric was entirely lost to view. Therefore, if the audience did not like the show, they ought to have given Mr. Roberts a direct hint to that effect, instead of lustily applauding him while clamouring with contumely for Mr. Jerome. This was an occasion on which our habitual tenderness to the player, in contradistinction to the playwright, was decidedly misplaced. The moral of the evening may be summed up in the form of a conundrum: "When is an author not an author?—When he is writing for Mr. Arthur Roberts."

If I felt that Mr. Jerome was harshly dealt with by an inconsiderate pit and gallery, I had no such compassion for Mr. Adrian Ross. Pleasantly set by Mr. Osmond Carr, Mr. Ross's lyrics were treated with all the respect they deserved, and perhaps a little over. They are certainly the poorest set of jingles this bright and fertile rhymers has as yet given us. Not one of them shows any memorable ingenuity, and most of them are quite commonplace both in idea and execution. Moreover, Mr. Ross is subduing his talent to his medium in a way one cannot but deplore. With a little effort, a man of his ability might do much to refine this form of entertainment. Mr. Ross not only abstains from any such attempt, but makes him-

self the humble servant of the vulgarest section of his public. He turns out with bland docility the indispensable Piccadilly-Circus ditty in feeble imitation of "Her Golden Hair was hanging down her Back," and he reels off without a blush the wretched, insincere Bacchanalian babble, on the model of "Champagne Charlie," which one scarcely hears nowadays even at a self-respecting music-hall. Is it not depressing to find a man of Mr. Ross's talent engaged in pouring forth such dismal and deleterious stuff as this:

"Then stand it, hand it, every chance one gets ;
 Every chappie jolly and happy,
 Every girl is bright and snappy ;
 Laughing, quaffing, waving our cigarettes,
 Here's to the fizz, whatever it is, for we are the Pommery
 Pets !"

His attempt to supply Miss Sadie Jerome with a second "Lalage Potts" sensation was frustrated partly, no doubt, by some one else's unhappy notion of putting her in "rational dress." We have all seen a whirlwind in skirts, but a tornado in knickerbockers is a contradiction in terms.

An entertainment more or less remotely resembling the first-night *Biarritz* may, for aught I know, outrun the century. Mr. Arthur Roberts, though a bad collaborator, is an inimitable comedian in his peculiar line, and Miss Kitty Loftus, Miss Phyllis Broughton,

Miss Millie Hylton, Mr. Fred Kaye, and Mr. Eric Thorne, are all "clever people" who have their public well in hand: The tumult of the first-night was of no real significance; but in so far as it was directed against Mr. Jerome it went to the wrong address.

XVII.

"THE ROGUE'S COMEDY"—"MARY PENNINGTON, SPINSTER"—"ROMEO AND JULIET"—"THE GEISHA."

29th April.

THE ridiculous afterpiece volunteered by the gallery on the first night of *The Rogue's Comedy** may, perhaps, prove the beginning of the end of a somewhat undignified theatrical custom. The play had highly entertained the audience, and there was an enthusiastic call for the author, Mr. Henry Arthur Jones. But it was clear at the same time that there were some dissentients in the gallery; without whom, indeed, no first night would now be complete. Mr. Jones did not choose to gratify these austere critics by coming forward to be hooted at, nor would he, or Mr. Willard, condescend to any subterfuge or apology in the matter. The footlights were lowered,

* April 21—May 30.

as who should say *Bonsoir!*—but the ravening author-baiters were not to be so easily baulked of their prey. For twenty-seven minutes by Shrewsbury clock (or the nearest available substitute) they maintained their posts in the gallery, shouting themselves hoarse in mingled entreaty and execration. No doubt they were joined by many of those who had originally been well-affected, but who felt that by the author's non-appearance a cherished privilege was being infringed. Mr. Jones, however, stood firm, and as midnight drew on the malcontents drew off. At last the shrunken remnant of them struck up "We won't go home till morning," and "vowing they would ne'er depart—departed." Now, in this little contest, Mr. Jones was clearly in the right. There is no law compelling a dramatist to exhibit himself on the stage; and if the gallery alleges an established custom of courtesy, the author may pertinently inquire why the courtesy is to be all on one side? Not that one wants to see courtesy substituted for candour. Those of the paying public who, after a fair and patient hearing, honestly dislike a play, have a perfect right to express their displeasure in the recognised fashion; but the author has an equal right to decline receiving their remonstrances in person. "Is it—is it done in public?" asked Major Pendennis, on learning that Pen had been plucked. Why should the playwright

be denied the undergraduate's privilege of taking his plucking in decent privacy? I fancy dramatists will presently realise that whether applause or hisses be their lot—and few, nowadays, entirely 'scape hissing—their more dignified course is to remain unseen. The fashion of calling the author has now enjoyed a good lease of life. It came in some fifty years ago, and might with great propriety go out with the century. On the first night of *Ion*, in 1836, Talfourd rather hankered after showing himself on the stage, but Macready said, "On no account in the world!" In 1851, on the other hand, when George Henry Lewes's *Noble Heart* was produced at the Olympic, the author "passed smiling across the stage"; but even then his doing so was thought unusual. Perhaps the first night of *The Rogue's Comedy* may be cited in after years as initiating the decline of a discredited custom.

The piece itself may be briefly docketed as a first-rate play of the second order. Mr. Jones has frequently done far more ambitious work. He has woven fabrics of deeper pile, more delicate texture and richer colouring. But he has done nothing that showed an easier mastery of his craft. The story is ingeniously conceived, and brightly, entertainingly told. Though it offers no very penetrating criticism of life, it has sufficient bearing on social phenomena of the day to give it a touch of satiric

quality. It is not precisely a one-part play, for some of the minor parts are far from ineffective; but there is only one character in it, or at most one and a half—a better half. Mr. Bailey Prothero is a variant on a well-known type, but he is a modern and interesting variant. The conventional playwright reproduces without variation types which have become obsolete; the dramatist who has his eye on life as well as on the theatre notes and seizes upon new and living embodiments of types which may be, in substance, as old as the hills. Mr. Jones, then, has given us a Mercadet up to date; and since Mercadet, or his English equivalent, Mr. Affable Hawk, we have had no more original or effective presentment of the type. It was a happy idea to show the clairvoyant developing into the Stock Exchange tipster; for who can doubt that superstition plays a large part in this form of gambling as in every other? I own I felt a transient disappointment on finding that the idea of the son unwittingly tracking down his own father and mother was not to be developed to the full. I had looked forward to some feat of detective ingenuity, leading up to a poignant situation. But Mr. Jones preferred to sheer off from this melodramatic and foregone effect, and keep his play entirely in the key of comedy. No doubt it will serve Mr. Willard's purpose all the better.

Mr. Willard's performance was vivid, masterful, and genuinely humorous. He seemed to me to overdo the hysterical laughter of the second act. There is nothing of which we sooner tire than laughter on the stage. We want to do the laughing ourselves. Miss Olliffe made a character of the charlatan's wife and confederate, not so much by her acting, though that was clever enough, as by her remarkable appearance, which suited the part to a nicety. Mr. Sydney Brough was very amusing as Mr. Prothero's chief dupe, and Mr. Herbert Standing made a really memorable study of a long-firm swindler fallen on evil days. Lady Monckton was sound and satisfactory as the tolerant woman of the world, now so indispensable, and Mr. W. J. Lovell, as the purposely long-lost son, was manly and agreeable. By the way, I am not at all sure of the morality of *The Rogue's Comedy*—the rogues are so much more interesting and sympathetic than the (more or less) honest people.

A pleasant four-act comedy by Mr. W. R. Walkes, entitled *Mary Pennington, Spinster*, produced at the St. James's last Friday afternoon,* set me speculating upon the reason why, from Aristophanes downwards, the comic stage has invariably been conservative in its tendency. Even Ibsen when he wrote comedy — in *The League of Youth* —

* April 24.

managed to get himself hailed and assailed as a pillar of conservatism. One sees no reason in the nature of things why (for instance) the Lynn Linton ideal of womanhood should not be as open to caricature as the Sarah Grand ideal—but no one seems to attempt the adventure. Certainly not Mr. Walkes. In an entirely genial, amiable fashion, he rolls into one the *Précieuses Ridicules* and the *Femmes Savantes*. His strong-minded woman is a charming creature, but it is only by dint of proving herself weak-minded far beyond the average of her sex; while her ward and disciple is (at any rate as played by Miss Mary Jerrold) a quite pathetically delightful — Gilbertian caricature. In the first two acts, this was all very well; the dialogue was sparkling, skilful, and in excellent taste. But when Mary Pennington, who, whether strong-minded or not, is presented as a real and credible woman, suddenly plumped down to the Gilbertian level by seriously encouraging Prudence Dering to set an examination-paper for her empty-headed suitor, it seemed to me that Mr. Walkes was hopelessly jumbling satiric comedy and extravaganza. Equally hard to accept, though in a different way, was his method of bringing about the misunderstanding between Mary Pennington and her lover which he needed in order to get a fourth act out of his theme. Nevertheless, the play showed marked ability and

a charming touch in dialogue. Miss Kate Rorke was sincere and sympathetic as the heroine, and Mr. Cyril Maude was good as the somewhat conventionally benevolent physician. Of Miss Mary Jerrold, a most promising newcomer, I have already spoken. Mr. Sydney Brough, as her numskull adorer, once more proved himself an excellent comedian, and Mr. Frank Fenton, as the serious lover, played with intelligence and refinement. Mr. Fenton, however, should hold in check a somewhat stagey sentimentality of accent and style.

Mr. H. B. Irving, in whom I have always recognised the promise of a romantic actor, has been playing Shakespeare at Camberwell during the past week—indeed, a great deal too much of Shakespeare. No actor that ever lived could play Hamlet five times and Romeo twice in the space of six days (to say nothing of scenes from *Hamlet*, *Romeo and Juliet*, and *As You Like It* at a special morning performance) without devastating his talent. Salvini himself, with his herculean frame, his organ voice, and his long experience of the stage, would never play more than four times a week; Mr. H. B. Irving light-heartedly undertakes just twice as much work. I saw his Romeo on the evening of Shakespeare's birthday,* and found it a gallant and picturesque performance, bearing too evident traces, however,

* April 23.

of haste and overwork. Mr. Irving ought really to husband his voice a little, if he is ever to do justice to his unmistakable gifts. As it is, it altogether lacks the notes of tenderness, intensity, passion. There is no medium in the actor's delivery between tonelessness and vehemence. He has a voice to shout with, though even that shows signs of wear ; but he cannot make a whisper carry, and still less glow and vibrate with emotion. Nevertheless the performance was interesting and attractive, under rather trying circumstances. If only Mr. Irving could find time and opportunity to cultivate his very real talent, instead of going Marcus-Superbussing about the world ! I have no space to enter into details as to the general performance. Let me only implore Mr. Ben Greet to have done with the tasteless Dalyism of accompanying Shakespeare's music with meaningless and distracting twiddlings on the orchestra. At least one-third of the balcony scene was rendered quite inaudible by this impertinent "melodrame." Mr. Greet, too, makes a serious mistake in imitating the recent Lyceum setting of the tomb scene, placing Juliet on a high bier in front, and making Romeo and Paris enter from the back. Whatever excuse there might be for this arrangement at the Lyceum, vanishes with the roomy stage. At the Métropole half the action was concealed by Juliet's bier.

Besides, the great effect of the scene should be the disclosure of Juliet's figure, as though carved in alabaster, when the vault doors are burst open. By Mr. Forbes Robertson's arrangement (if his it be) this climax is sacrificed with no approach to an equivalent advantage.

The Geisha, at Daly's Theatre,* strikes me as a great advance on *The Artist's Model*; whence Mr. "Owen Hall" may perhaps draw gloomy auguries as to its chances of popularity. But it is still a long way from being over the heads of its audience. Though comparatively free from vulgarity, it cannot be accused of an over-nice refinement; and although not absolutely incoherent, it is still far enough from possessing any merit or ingenuity of invention. What it does possess is an exceedingly pretty setting (the Japanese dresses are more beautiful, to my thinking, than those in *The Mikado*), along with clever versification, for Mr. Harry Greenbank is improving as Mr. Adrian Ross falls off, and a really graceful and delicate score by Mr. Sidney Jones. The performance, too, is excellent in its kind, spirited without being epileptic or blatant, and thoroughly well rehearsed. Miss Marie Tempest as a real, and Miss Letty Lind as a pretended, dancing-girl, are both charming; Mr. Hayden Coffin is much admired in his naval uniform, and Mr. Harry Monkhouse, as

* April 25—still running.

a Japanese heavy villain (a marquis, of course), is genuinely funny. Altogether, a capital entertainment of its kind.

XVIII.

THE WYNDHAM CELEBRATION—"THE NEW BABY"
—"A NIGHT OUT"—"MONSIEUR DE PARIS."

6th May.

THE performances in connection with the Wyndham Celebration * are exempt from criticism in virtue alike of their occasion and their conditions. Such performances, or rather ceremonies, remind one of that night when, according to Oberon, "certain stars shot madly from their spheres"—not, in this case, "to hear the sea-maid's music," but to do honour to a valued comrade and a respected leader. The only novelty of any importance was Mrs. Patrick Campbell's Lady Teazle in the last three acts of *The School for Scandal*, of which all that can fairly be said is that no actress could do herself justice in thus jumping into the middle of a part, amid all the hurry-scurry and excitement of such an afternoon. The really interesting feature of both afternoon and evening was the cordial and unanimous goodwill towards the hero of the occasion which reigned both before and behind

* Lyceum (afternoon) and Criterion (evening), May 1.

the curtain. To so many other expressions of that feeling, I desire most sincerely to add mine. My memory of Mr. Charles Wyndham's acting goes back, not quite to the beginning of his career, but at least to the beginning of those twenty years of management which the celebrations of Friday so agreeably rounded off. During all that time my admiration for his art has been warm and unswerving. Superlatives are always invidious, so I shall not call him the best actor of his generation ; but this I will say, without fear of contradiction, that there is no finer comedian at present on the stage. He combines lightness and force in an extraordinary degree : he can be airy as a zephyr and impetuous as a cyclone. I have sometimes been moved to remonstrate with Mr. Wyndham on his managerial methods, or, to be more exact, on his literary policy. Mr. Wyndham's unfailing answer has been a tacit appeal to the public ; and the public has almost invariably decided in his favour. They knew that at the Criterion they could always find acting of unique excellence in its kind, and they cared very little as to the nature or origin of the material their favourite actor chose to work upon. So great and so well-deserved personal popularity can snap its fingers at theories, principles, and ideals. Thus Mr. Wyndham, from his point of view, was entirely right, and I, from mine, was perhaps not altogether wrong. In any case I venture to take

it as a good omen that he proposes to open his second twenty years of management with an original English comedy.

I find it hard to express in language fit for publication the disgust with which the new farce at the Royalty* filled me to overflowing. Lest I should be thought to give a jaundiced and distorted version of it, I go for the facts of the case to the first morning paper I happen to open. The critic of this paper is constitutionally genial and disinclined to blame. Indeed, his notice in this instance purports to be a favourable one, for after saying that *The New Baby* "goes unpleasantly near unsavoury subjects by suggestion," he sums it up as "an agreeable pleasantry and a decidedly mirthful one." Thus, then, he sets forth the plot:—

"It is rather a daring thing of Colonel Wilberforce Walker, who has married a lady of means in Cornwall, to suggest as an excuse for certain trips to gay London, and the means to enjoy them, that he has before marriage entangled himself with a fair one, and is the putative father of a son well-grown into manhood; but the ruse opens a fair field for farcical complications when his emotional wife, on her silver wedding day, expresses a desire to adopt the child, and insists on taking him to her arms."

Here I interrupt my friend to explain that this ruse has been kept up for twenty-five years; that during

* April 28—May 16.

all that time Colonel Walker has received from his wife five pounds a month for the support of this imaginary child; and that at the end of these five-and-twenty years she asks him "Is it a girl or a boy?" amid the roars of the intelligent audience. Furthermore, we obtain a glimpse of the purposes to which the five pounds a month have been applied, when a letter from the correspondent in London, who is supposed to have the son's affairs in charge, is found to contain an indecent photograph, over which the gallant Colonel and his daughter chuckle in unison behind his wife's back. Our impartial witness then proceeds:—

"The Colonel's comic despair when a suitor for his legitimate daughter's hand is mistaken by his wife for the imaginary son may be rather far-fetched when it is considered how easily the whole fabric of deceit may be upset. . . . How the suitor is persuaded that he is not his own mother's son, but is the fruit of an early error of the Colonel's wife, is perhaps a little too much for even farcical probabilities, especially when he is warned that he is about to marry a natural sister; but the complications are amusing, although not convincing, and there is plenty of hearty laughter got out of the piece."

Yes, that is true. An audience of apparently sane and reputable people laughed heartily at this abject negation of common sense and common decency. Nothing was too puerile or too fetid to tickle their fancies. Every age-old device, every far-fetched

ineptitude, commanded their dutiful acceptance. When the authors (said to be two German comedians) are hard up for a "curtain" to their first act, they make a servant-girl rush on the stage, and, for no reason in the world, go into hysterics. What can be more exhilarating than a servant-girl in hysterics! The theatre rocks with laughter. "How did that tune go?" says the henpecked husband, recalling with his prospective son-in-law the delights of the fast life they have shared; and the two together proceed to sketch a can-can, for the express purpose of being caught in the act by outraged virtue in the person of Mrs. Walker. The idea was probably ancient when Bulwer Lytton used it in *Money*; it has since done duty in a thousand farces; but still we laugh at it. At an early stage of the play a man of the name of "Wash" is mentioned. We at once foresee the inevitable witticism about some one being "sent home from the wash"; and when it comes we hail it with delight. Even I welcomed it, if not with a laugh, at least with a sigh of satisfaction; it was such a relief to get it over. But the fun did not culminate till we reached the scenes which sported gaily around the side-splitting topic of incest. Full quotation alone could carry with it the aroma of these rollicking passages. Perhaps a sufficient whiff of it may be conveyed in the following speeches, which are accurate in substance if not in words:—*Daughter*:

"But I didn't know I had a brother!" *Mother* (not aside, but aloud and with tragic emphasis): "Who knows but she may have a hundred!" *Daughter*: "But I can't go through life asking every young man I meet, 'Pray are you a distantly-related brother of mine?'" This is humour "made in Germany"; but as that alone is no great recommendation at the present moment, I presume it must touch an *allgemeinmenschlich* chord in the British bosom. Certainly the audience screamed, and thought it the finest fun in the world. There must be a curious and disquieting paralysis of intellect and torpor of imagination in the public which can sit placidly by and see such nauseous conclusions drawn from such imbecile premises. I think it is density rather than actual perversity that accounts for their attitude; but assuredly it is one or the other.

Miss Alice Mansfield's performance of the domineering wife showed genuine comic power, and Mr. W. G. Elliott's fantastic sketch of a fire-eating Spaniard had at least the merit of being studied from Spanish models, and so differing from the conventional and nondescript foreigner of farce. The rest of the acting was neither better nor worse than the occasion demanded. The German original, by the way, is called *Der Rabenvater*, by H. F. Fischer and J. Jarno; the adaptor, I am sorry to add, is Mr. Arthur Bouchier.

It is distinctly a change for the better to pass from Germany to France *viâ* New York. The American version of *L'Hôtel du Libre Echange*, by MM. Feydeau and Desvallières, produced at the Vaudeville* under the title of *A Night Out*, is certainly not remarkable for elevation of moral tone or refinement of comic method; but its vulgarity is redeemed by its jovial and irresistible gaiety. It is an enormous buffoonery which sticks at nothing that can possibly provoke laughter. There is a certain element of invention, of ingenuity, of what may be called intellectual fantasy in the farce; but if this begets the groundswell of laughter, the surface wavelets are generally produced by much simpler means—two couples quarrelling so vociferously that not a word they say can be distinguished, a man made sick by cigar-smoking, a man putting on a woman's hat, four girls in their nightdresses mistaken for ghosts, a man trying to hide in a chimney and masking his face in soot, some of which he communicates (as in the good old *Kiss in the Dark*) to a fair lady, a man and a woman with a black eye apiece, a stammering man, a scorching hot-water bottle bandied from one hand to another, and a plentiful sprinkling throughout of collisions, kicks, blows, shrieks, scuffles, and pantomime "rallies" of every description. All this clearly belongs to the most rudimentary order of comic

* April 29—still running.

material. Each incident, taken by itself, is in no way superior to the German authors' servant-girl in hysterics; but the unabashed piling up of these rough-and-tumble absurdities creates a sort of atmosphere of gross, physical laughter, like that which pervades some chapters of Smollett or the caricatures of Gillray, and revives the primitive savage in us not quite unrefreshingly. The surface humour of *A Night Out* is of the sort that makes the whole world kin. I would suggest the organisation of a company for a tour in Central Africa. The piece ought to be a great success at the Theatres Royal, Coomassie and Timbuctoo. But beneath this surface buffoonery there is a dexterity of construction which makes itself felt in the third act, and renders it irresistibly amusing. Indeed, the farce has the great merit of continuously improving as it goes on. The first act, in which the mere foundation is laid, is dull and sordid; the second act is a violent hurly-burly; the third act contains, or rather consists of, a cleverly devised and developed situation. The delicate ingenuity of the *Pink Dominoes* type of vaudeville is thickly overlaid with outrageous clowneries, and it must be admitted that the very enormity and effrontery of the methods employed, the very primitiveness of the laughter they provoke, is not without its effect in clearing the moral atmosphere. There is little or no sniggering prurience in the mirth

awakened by *A Night Out*. Though as vulgar as it can be, it is not so deleterious as the subtler species of French farce which was in vogue some ten or fifteen years ago.

The weight of the performance rests on the shoulders of Mr. George Giddens, who is quite admirable. He brings out the full effect of the situations without in the least adding to their vulgarity. Mr. Sugden, too, is good in a somewhat less effective part, and Mr. William Wyes, who is rapidly taking the place among low comedians left vacant by the death of Mr. W. J. Hill, is really funny as the stammering notary. Miss Fanny Ward, an American actress (apparently) of a somewhat music-hallish type of beauty, played the leading female part to the satisfaction of the audience, and was excellently seconded by Mrs. Edmund Phelps and Miss Pattie Browne.

Monsieur de Paris,* the one-act play by Miss Alicia Ramsey and Mr. Rudolph de Cordova which precedes *The New Baby* at the Royalty, justifies in some measure the rumours of Miss Ramsey's talent which have lately reached me from several quarters. This is the first piece of her work which has come in my way, and it whets my curiosity to see more. She is here handicapped by her theme, not merely, nor chiefly, because of its grimness, but

* April 16—May 5. See p. 219.

because it is one which gives our sympathies no resting-point. We can neither approve nor condemn the characters; we have no wish or hope concerning them to be fulfilled or defeated. Whether a man ought or ought not to marry an executioner's daughter is a question which leaves us cold. It is an academic poser, like the inquiry as to how many angels can dance on the point of a needle? The damages which the fair Jacinta awards herself for Henri's breach of promise are clearly excessive. No doubt we are to understand that she is suddenly mastered by an hereditary lust of blood; but there is no room in the little play for the development of any such idea. In effect, then, *Monsieur de Paris* is little more than a dabbling in horror for horror's sake; but it shows undeniable vigour of imagination, together with a certain sense of style which raises it well above the level of the commonplace. Miss Violet Vanbrugh's performance of Jacinta is also a remarkable piece of work, full of sincerity and strength. The part can scarcely be said to test the actress's original imagination, but it proves that her range of expression is much wider than one had imagined. Mr. Henry Vibart and Mr. Mark Kinghorne are good as the lover and the executioner-father.

XIX.

"KING HENRY IV."

13th May.

MOST cordially do I congratulate Mr. Beerbohm Tree upon his spirited and spirit-stirring revival of the first part of *King Henry the Fourth*.^{*} The idea does credit to his artistic ambition, the execution to his artistic intelligence. Here and there one may note a point for discussion, for reconsideration. Here and there a square peg creaks in a round hole, a line is misread, or a scene comes tardy off. But the general effort is all in the right direction. Mr. Tree has honestly tried to give us Shakespeare's play, not an entertainment of his own freely adapted from Shakespeare. He has made a conscientious, able, and (in the main) successful effort to let the poet speak for

* Produced on the afternoon of May 8, and repeated on the afternoons of May 13 and 20. Performed on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday evenings and Saturday afternoon of each week from May 28 to July 11, when the last performance took place in the afternoon. *Trilby* was performed on the first three nights of these weeks and on Wednesday afternoons. The last performances of *Trilby* took place on July 13 and 14. On Wednesday, July 15, being the last night of Mr. Beerbohm Tree's management at the Haymarket, a Farewell Performance took place, consisting of selections from *Henry IV.*, *Fédora* (with Mrs. Tree in the title part), *Trilby*, and *The Ballad-Monger*.

himself, and be his own interpreter. Whatever defects of detail I may find to remark upon (and many of these are practically beyond Mr. Tree's control), I wish to express once for all, with emphasis and sincerity, my warm appreciation of his generously inspired and truly enlightened endeavour.

First, as to the text. I ventured to put forward, some weeks ago,* a calculation of the time it ought to take to represent the whole of *Henry IV.*, obsolete passages and one clearly superfluous scene (iv. 4) alone excepted. Mr. Tree contested the accuracy of my calculation; but I think his own revival proves my case. In the first three acts he retained, on the whole, rather more of the text than I should have recommended. He cut the scene of the carriers, most of which I should have retained; but, on the other hand, he clung to the "Anon, anon" scene and to Lady Mortimer's Welsh, which I should have sacrificed without compunction. In the fourth and fifth acts he made some regrettable slashes, reducing them by (say) ten minutes in all. Now the whole time of performance, accurately noted, was two hours and thirty-five minutes. During that space of time the curtain was up and the action proceeding. Had the excised passages of the two last acts been restored, the time would have been, as nearly as possible, two hours and forty-five minutes, and that, I admit, would

* See Art. XIV.

have been too long by a quarter of an hour. But Mr. Tree must be well aware that several of the scenes, and notably the comic passages, were taken far more slowly than they ought to have been, and will be when the piece has settled down. When Mr. Tree himself, in particular, is quite at home in his words, the performance will be accelerated by at least a quarter of an hour. Thus my contention is, I believe, amply borne out. Nay, more, I am convinced that if the comic passages were taken in the right time, there would be room within the two hours and a half for the carrier scene, the drawer scene, the Welsh scene, and the "boastful rhetoric" of the last acts to boot—in brief, for every word of the play that is comprehensible to a modern audience.

At it is, let it be clearly understood that we had at the Haymarket on Friday a much better version of *Henry IV.* than John Kemble's; a better version, I have little doubt, than that used by Macready and Phelps, in the days when a five-act play had to be sandwiched between a farce and a long afterpiece; a distinctly better version than that suggested in the "Henry Irving Shakespeare." There has been no nearer approach in our day to the complete performance of a Shakespearian drama. And this was rendered possible by a frank facing, not an ingenious shirking, of the problem presented. The actors (exceptions apart) recognised that a long speech

must be treated in accordance with its own laws; that the point to be aimed at was impetuous expression, not "subtle" suggestion; and that it was their business to interpret the eloquence of Shakespeare's words, not to omit as many of them as they dared and trust to the eloquence of their own pauses. It would be too much to say that they all understood or reproduced the splendid harmony of their piled-up periods. But where they failed it was from lack of skill, not of will. If they did not all wear the cothurnus with an equal grace, at least they did not stumble slipshod through the ruins of Shakespeare's text.

Space and time alike forbid me to go through the text minutely, suggesting here the reinstatement of a valuable line, there the elimination of a verse or a witticism which neither actor nor audience understands, and which therefore retards the movement to no purpose. It is only in dealing with the last two acts that Mr. Tree exposes himself to any serious reproach. Here a purist might accuse him of sacrificing the text to "inexplicable dumb show and noise." Not being a purist, I draw a distinction. The dumb show is all right, the noise all wrong. The tableaux are highly effective, and so cleverly managed that no appreciable time is wasted on them. On the other hand, it is a very false realism which drowns two-thirds of the battle-dialogue in random

tootlings and mechanical sword-clinking behind the scenes. If we must have what Mr. Gilbert calls "the animated rattle of a complicated battle, and the rum-tum-tum of the military drum," let it be very discreetly suggested, in such a way as to spare both the actors' lungs and the ears of the audience. The perpetual trumpet-blasts in particular were simply torturing. And why, oh why, must Mr. Tree cut the noble concluding scene? The release of Douglas is not "boastful rhetoric" but high chivalry, ending the play upon a thrilling note of Shakespeare's own trumpet, which is, after all, supreme in the world's orchestra. It would have given grace and meaning to the final tableau, without in the least impairing its animation. John Kemble had the wit to retain this passage. And Kemble, by the way, made two transpositions in Act V., Sc. 2, so trifling, and yet so manifestly advantageous, that I cannot but think them legitimate. He delayed the re-entrance of Douglas, with the four lines beginning "Arm, gentlemen! to arms!" until after Hotspur's line, "That he shall shrink under my courtesy"; and he placed the line "Now, *Esperance!* Percy! and set on!" at the end of the scene, after the parting embrace of the captains. It would be the veriest pedantry that would quarrel with such trivial and yet helpful readjustments.

Now for the individual performances. In passing

from the inferior Falstaff of *The Merry Wives* to Falstaff the Great, Mr. Tree has, if not quite risen to his larger opportunities, at least shown that he can very easily do so. His memory is constitutionally treacherous, and with the whole weight and anxiety of such a production resting upon him, while he has another trying part to play every evening, he could scarcely be expected to be letter-perfect on the first afternoon. But Falstaff is a part in which the actor must be not only letter-perfect but comma-perfect if he is to play it with full effect. Readiness is the essence of Falstaff's wit, slowness and hesitancy are utterly foreign to it. Moreover, it suffers cruelly from paraphrases and approximations. Falstaff always puts the right word in the right place; you can no more improve the rhythm of his speeches than you can their meaning. Therefore, without complaining of his first-day stumblings and fumbings, I adjure Mr. Tree so thoroughly to memorise his lines as to move with perfect ease and certainty through the adventures of the fat knight. Intellectual ease will lend him physical ease; the scenes will move rapidly and lightly, and the effect will be incalculably enhanced. I am convinced that it needs nothing but *precision* to make Mr. Tree's Falstaff one of the greatest on record. He has an immense advantage in his stature; Falstaff ought to be big as well as fat. He has cultivated to perfection the fruity voice, the

rolling eye, and the ample gesture. I believe we have hitherto done injustice to his performance for the very reason that it is to all intents and purposes the one Falstaff of our generation. We try it by ideal, not by practicable standards; and who can contend against a vague ideal? I find it hard to conceive a better Falstaff than Mr. Tree might be if he would thoroughly master the part; and as it is, he makes the great scene of the second act really delightful. By the way, he misunderstands one phrase in the last act. Pointing to Sir Walter Blunt's body, he says, "There's honour for you!" and then taps his own breastplate as he proceeds, "Here's no vanity!" But "Here's no vanity" is ironically applied to Blunt quite as much as the previous phrase. A hundred instances of this ironic negative might easily be quoted—for instance, in *The Taming of the Shrew*, Grumio's "Here's no knavery! See, to beguile the old folks, how the young folks lay their heads together!"

The surprise and delight of the afternoon was Mr. Lewis Waller's Hotspur. There was some doubt beforehand as to whether the humour of the part would prove to be within Mr. Waller's range; and indeed a more humorous, a more John-Bullish Hotspur might be conceived. But Mr. Waller showed no positive deficiency even in humour; and in all the other attributes of the character, in fire, energy,~

turbulence, impatient pride and indomitable daring, he was simply ideal. And he spoke his lines with as much correctness as spirit, thrilling the audience with the warm resonance of his beautiful voice. The enthusiasm with which his performance was received proves, if proof were needed, that it is not Shakespeare's long speeches that bore modern audiences, but the timid, short-winded, and halting delivery of the modern actor. I thought Mr. Waller a shade too openly menacing in his first scene with the King. It was hard to imagine that a man of Henry's mettle would tolerate such a flagrant abandonment of all forms of respect in his own palace. Perhaps a little outward show of self-restraint might temper even Hotspur's indignation in the presence of the King. Otherwise I know not what improvement to suggest in this fine performance—unless it be that Mr. Waller should not spoil one of his lines by saying “ants” instead of “pismires.” Mrs. Beerbohm Tree, who looked the part of Lady Percy to perfection, seemed rather to misconceive the spirit of her great speech. She was plaintive, almost whining, and far too slow. Where she says that Hotspur, in his sleep, talks “Of prisoners’ ransom and of soldiers slain,” she throws a tremor of pathos into the word “slain” which is quite out of place. She is not the woman to sentimentalise over the incidents of war. It is evident, from her whole relation to her husband, that she is

not only Lady Percy but Lady Hotspur, as proud and resolute as he. She wants to be his comrade, and is hurt by his distrust of her in that capacity. Surely a clinging, wheedling tenderness is not the tone for her to adopt.

Mr. William Mollison spoke the lines of King Henry far from badly, but showed no adequate conception of the character. He made him a burly, overbearing personage, not the melancholy, suspicious, politic, and weary Bolingbroke. In the scene with the Prince of Wales, he even put a sort of humour, almost of joviality, into his satiric picture of "the skipping king," his predecessor. There was not an ounce of humour in Shakespeare's Bolingbroke. Then, again, he took the scene too slowly, with unnecessary and meaningless pauses. Mr. Cookson, in Manchester, made it far more human and moving. Mr. Frank Gillmore, who, for the rest, was but moderately good as the Prince of Wales, spoke his great speech in this scene with excellent spirit. His adieu to Hotspur he spoiled by stooping down and speaking it almost into the dead man's ear. He should simply rest on his sword and contemplate his fallen foe. All the fighting, by the way, was thrillingly ferocious.

Mr. Everill, unfortunately, has no longer the strength for such a part as Worcester. The character simply disappeared in his hands. Mr. A. E. Hippius was good as Sir Richard Vernon, and Mr. Holman

Clark made a picturesque and humorous Glendower. Mr. C. M. Hallard transformed Mortimer's verses into insignificant prose. Mr. Lionel Brough made an exceedingly comic Bardolph, and Mr. D. J. Williams's Francis was a clever bit of fooling. Miss Kate Phillips was, to my thinking, too trim and youthful for Mrs. Quickly. Miss Marion Evans's Welsh song formed a pleasant interlude. Whoever supplied her Welsh speeches had been so conscientious as to write one of them, at least, in blank verse.

If the public is not wholly given over to music-hall ineptitudes and base buffoonery, it will flock to the Haymarket every Wednesday afternoon of the season to enjoy this liberal and dignified resuscitation of one of the masterpieces, comic and heroic, of our national literature. Mr. Tree's individual enterprise and enthusiasm have done, and done worthily, what other nations would be ashamed to leave to individual enterprise. Let us see that he has no cause to regret it.

XX.

"A MATCHMAKER"—"ROMEO AND JULIET"

—"JO"—"ROSEMARY."

20th May.

AN antique—or at any rate an antiquated—philosopher has remarked that there are only half-a-dozen good

stories in the world, five of which cannot be told before ladies. Even as I quote the saying, I blush for the depth of masculine fatuity revealed in it. How the ladies, hearing it, must have laughed in their sleeves! Perhaps it is this "inward and suppressed mirth," as Mr. Weller puts it, that has so inordinately distended the sleeves of a whole generation. What! The pompous, self-satisfied, male creatures fancy they have these five stories all to themselves, and go about snuffing old moralities, "*Maxima debetur feminis reverentia*," and so forth, and enveloping themselves in impenetrable clouds of tobacco-smoke, to chuckle at their ease over the dainties we may not share! Poor purblind mortals! As if the five jests and their five thousand variants were not our property as much as theirs! As if the boudoir had not its freemasonry as well as the smoking-room! But, in the meantime, this absurd masculine superstition has caused a great deal of embarrassment, and partially eclipsed the gaiety of nations. Moreover, the feminine nature is nothing if not generous, expansive. Having sufficiently derided us in private, the ladies are now making everything comfortable all round by telling us on the stage, with the limpid candour which so exquisitely becomes them, the very anecdotes which the philosopher aforesaid regarded as for ever beyond their ken. Foolish philosopher! It was *his* ken that was

restricted by his nimbus of tobacco-smoke. Yet it would appear that the lady-humorists—the Filomena and Fiammetta of the New Decameron—feel the necessity of drawing the line somewhere. It is a somewhat arbitrary, not to say imaginary, line; but they do draw it. Anything and everything may be said so long as it is *autour du mariage*, or—but this comes to the same thing—*autour du divorce*. There must be a marriage somewhere around, in the future, the present, or the past; but, that convention respected, there need be no limit to agreeable facetiousness. Of course, this practically means that there is no limit at all, for four out of the specified five stories come well within the definition. Thus all is plain sailing—and plain speaking—and, under the benign auspices of the egregious Mr. Redford, the English comic stage may look forward with confidence, not to a Renaissance (we have done with such pedantries), but to a new Restoration, in which the Wycherleys and Congreves, as the spirit of the age decrees, shall yield precedence to the Aphra Behns.

There is wit and there is scenic invention in *A Matchmaker*,* by Miss Clo. Graves and Miss Gertrude Kingston. As acted, and excellently acted, at the Shaftesbury, the piece is anything but dull. For my part, I make very little account of the current objections to it—that it is formless, scrappy,

* May 9—22.

unconstructed, a series of scenes without beginning, middle, or end. This is in reality definition, not criticism. The play is not a well-knit play—granted; but it may be very clever, amusing, and successful for all that. The plot, or rather the main plot, for there are several, is entirely conventional, and foreseen from the outset. But what then? The authors have not set out to tell a story, but to present a series of social caricatures. They have made "Gyp," not Scribe, their model, and they have the art to keep us interested and entertained without the aid of a story. It is not a pleasing picture that they present, and of course it is not a true one. Society could not hold together for a week if it were such a hotbed of corruption and idiocy. The world, even in the narrowest sense, is not composed of noodles and minxes in the proportion here represented. The social picture is inspired by the second-hand cynicism of second-rate journalism, and is not for a moment to be taken seriously. But as in the flashy comic papers which swarm on the bookstalls we nowadays find a great deal of remarkably clever draughtsmanship, so in *A Matchmaker* we cannot but recognise a knack of dialogue and an instinct of scenic effect which redeem the play, if not from vulgarity, at any rate from ineptitude. It is a very sound principle of criticism that when you are amused you are amused, and it is idle to pick your

amusement to pieces afterwards. Personally, I should have liked the play better without the element of boudoir wit, as I suppose we must in this case call it. Only one of these scintillations seemed to me at all clever—and that was *not* the scintillation of the bedroom candle. The rest were dragged in for their own sweet sake, and struck me as rather sickening. But I do not at all insist on this personal point of view. If the public likes that sort of thing, and Mr. Redford smiles upon it, who am I that I should object? But *does* the real public really like that sort of thing? First-night audiences, to be sure, enjoy being shocked, and the sensation is doubly piquant when the shocker is a lady. But I have a shrewd suspicion that these precious “audacities,” if they attract a certain section of the public, repel a much larger section. The real successes are not made by “audacities.” And those in *A Matchmaker* are not even of the essence of the play; they do not necessarily arise from the situation, but are carefully inserted, like truffles in a turkey. There are some half-dozen in all of these gratuitous tit-bits; and it would not surprise me if in each of them a month's run was sacrificed to a first-night snigger.

The play is well acted all round. It is precisely one of those pieces to which English acting does thorough justice. Especially admirable were Miss Lena Ashwell and Miss Beatrice Ferrar. Miss Ash-

well, as the serious heroine, played her principal scene, in the second act, with real delicacy and skill. Miss Ferrar, as the hoyden, no doubt obeyed her instructions in acting an extravagant part extravagantly; but there was always cleverness in her extravagance. For the rest, Mr. Lewis Waller, Mr. C. P. Little, Mr. Alfred Maltby, Miss Gertrude Kingston, Miss Florence West, and Miss Nina Boucicault make up a very strong cast.

Miss Esmé and Miss Vera Beringer appeared at the Prince of Wales's last Friday afternoon as Romeo and Juliet.* Miss Esmé Beringer is a clever young lady, and made a graceful, inoffensive, and even intelligent Romeo: I am told that in some of the later scenes she was quite remarkable; but, for my part, I hold such travesties, in their very nature, unprofitable and unattractive. Miss Vera Beringer, whose *Little Lord Fauntleroy* showed that she possessed genuine dramatic instinct, was of course sadly overweighted by the part of Juliet. She has no command as yet either of her limbs or of her voice. Her movements are ungraceful, her gestures monotonous and often meaningless, and her intonations forced. In a word, she has her whole art to learn; but she has good material to work upon, and ought certainly to make her way.

Miss Jennie Lee has opened Drury Lane at

* May 15.

"cheap summer prices," and is playing her old part of Jo* in *Bleak House*. It is a remarkable piece of acting in its kind, and very genuinely Dickens-ish. Of course it has not gained in freshness or spontaneity; but I saw it again with pleasure, and fully understood its abiding popularity. The piece is a crude affair, but sufficiently entertaining. There is something refreshing in an occasional plunge into Dickens, even in this violently condensed and exaggerated form.

Oddly enough, I wrote the foregoing sentence last Saturday morning without the least prevision of the douche of Dickens which awaited us at the Criterion in the evening. Not a cold and bracing douche—oh, no!—it was mild, genial, soothing, almost luxurious; but, whatever its temperature, it was certainly impregnated, supersaturated, with Dickens. The authors made no attempt to dissemble the source of their inspiration. They formally invoked the spirit of Dickens at the very outset, and in a later scene they introduced Boz in person—presenting him, not absolutely to the vision of the audience, but to that of the characters on the stage. Whether you are entertained or bored by *Rosemary*† will depend, I fancy, upon your taste or distaste for

* May 13--29.

† May 16—July 25. Reproduced October 6—December 26.
Again reproduced February 13—March 20, 1897.

Dickens. For my part, I love him (though I do not on that account hold myself bound to hate Thackeray), and I thoroughly enjoyed *Rosemary*. Perhaps it would have been juster and more generous to have come straight to the point without these preliminary flourishes, and thanked Messrs. Louis Parker and Murray Carson, very warmly and sincerely, for an altogether delightful evening. Indeed, I found their work so amiable, so graceful, so truly and ingeniously humorous, that I have no heart to criticise it in detail. They might, of course, have made their comedy more poignant by choosing for their heroine no mere ringleted doll from a *Book of Beauty*, but a woman with some depth of character—an Agnes, not a Dora. But I am not at all sure that this would have improved their play. After all, the puppet with the auburn locks was the typical Dickens heroine of 1837; and what they would have gained in poignancy they would have lost in irony. The real point of the thing lies in Sir Jasper's idealisation of the brainless chit, whose whole heart is all the time given to her cub of a William. Despite the simplicity of the theme, there is a charming freshness of humorous invention in the details. It may be childish, but I confess to having felt a little thrill, as of contact with a vanished world, when "the Duke" passed the windows, even while I was smiling at the whimsical way in which his transit was woven

into the dramatic fabric. On the whole, the authors succeeded to perfection in begetting in me that midway mood between smiles and tears to which their fable appealed. And what a relief it was, after recent experiences (at the Comedy, the Royalty, the Vaudeville, and the Shaftesbury), to see a play without a questionable line in it, a play that seemed to be, like Pendennis's *Pall Mall Gazette*, written "by gentlemen for gentlemen"—and gentlewomen. There was some difference of opinion, I gathered, about the value of the last act, which consists of an epilogue-in-soliloquy spoken by Sir Jasper fifty years after the main action is over. I can only say that it seemed to me original, delightful, pathetic without being maudlin, and admirably acted by Mr. Wyndham. At first I feared that his senility was going to be conventional. But after a minute or two he got his voice better in hand, and played with a most artistic delicacy and avoidance of emphasis. We all know what the ordinary playwright would have made of such a scene, the sentimental commonplaces he would have revelled in; and we all know how the ordinary actor would have whined and maundered through it. But here the very pathos of the thing lay in the old man's unconsciousness of pathos. He has forgotten much; still more he has ceased to feel or realise; it is all so far behind him. The authors have steered a very accurate course between cynicism and mawkish-

ness, and the actor has interpreted their conception with sensitive art. Miss Mary Moore is charming as the heroine; Mr. Barnes and Mr. Alfred Bishop are very good as two old "humorists" in the seventeenth-century sense of the word; and Mr. James Welch plays to perfection the small part of an old postboy. It is one of the best things this fine comedian has done.

XXI.

SHAW *v.* SHAKESPEARE AND OTHERS.

27th May.

MR. GEORGE BERNARD SHAW is in the habit of calling himself an Irishman, and even of accounting for his genius on the basis of his Keltic origin. It is not always safe to take on trust Mr. Shaw's revelations as to his family history, but when he says that he was born and bred in Dublin, he somehow carries conviction. On the other hand, when he calls himself a Kelt, his complexion, his temperament, his very name belie him. I have long believed him to be of Scandinavian ancestry—doubtless descended from one of the Norse kings of "Dyflin," as it is called in the *Heimskringla*—and now his article on *Henry IV.* at the Haymarket supplies the last link in the chain of evidence. Two races, the Scandinavians and the Malays, are constitutionally subject to sudden crises of destructive

frenzy, in which they murderously assail whatever happens to come in their path. The Malays call this "running amok"; but as there is no record of a Malay settlement in Dublin, we must, in Mr. Shaw's case, fall back on the Scandinavian term, *Berserker-gang*, and see in his unprovoked assault on everything in general, and Shakespeare in particular, a wild trick of his Viking ancestry. His case is a curious one, and well worth the study of the psychiatric specialist. It is in some sense a high tribute to Shakespeare and the Haymarket performance. Evidently the breath of battle got over the footlights with unusual pungency, and fevered the critic's blood. The clash of swords awoke in him vague ancestral memories. Like the war-horse of Scripture, "He said among the trumpets: Ha, ha! He smelled the battle near at hand, the thunder of the captains and the shouting." Nay, is not Hotspur himself a bit of a Berserk?—and we all know how contagious are such frenzies. Mr. Shaw evidently left the theatre with the virus seething in his veins. Finding himself weaponless (for he disdains to carry an umbrella) he instinctively rushed home in search of his ancestor's battle-axe; but that heirloom has probably been mislaid in the course of generations. In its absence, he fell upon the first lethal instrument that came to hand—a typewriter. "Ha!" he cried. "How sings the skald? 'In the hands of men entirely great, the typewriter is mightier

than the sword ! ' " Then, plunging fiercely at the keys, he made them clash and clang like the glaives at Svolder or Stiklastad, as he rattled off, " This is a miserably incompetent world ! " and proceeded to fall foul of the medical profession, the legal profession, the arts of tailoring, shoemaking and acting, Shakespeare, Henry IV., Henry V., Falstaff, Mr. Beerbohm Tree, Mrs. Beerbohm Tree, and the whole Haymarket company severally and collectively. At last, sated with carnage, and his frenzy having spent itself, he stayed his hand and suffered four subordinate performers to " come off with credit. " They were lucky to come off with their lives. In the Shaw Saga, when it falls to be written, there will be many stirring pages, but none more sanguinary than this.

There is a superb and swashing energy about Mr. Shaw in his Berserk fits which I sincerely admire—at a safe distance. I only wish he could arrange to have them more opportunely. There are times when they would come in exceedingly well—times when I myself, if I had it in my blood, would willingly " go Berserk. " Debauches of brutality and baseness in popular drama and farce, exhibitions of pretentious impotence in Shakespeare—if these put Mr. Shaw beside himself, I should watch his weapon-play with sympathetic glee. I could name at least one notorious case in which he might very well have taken down the ancestral pole-axe. Indeed, though I am

no son of the Vikings myself, but come of a cannier stock, I would gladly have stood back to back with him and defied the barbarian hordes. But in that case he rather meanly sheered off, after a little half-hearted skirmishing, and left me to bear the burden and heat of the day. Now, when out of pure love of his art, or, if you prefer it, of his calling or his work, a manager makes an honest effort to do a fine thing, and produces, even with the imperfect means at his command, a great and memorable effect, Mr. Shaw finds nothing better to do than to heap savage contempt on the whole enterprise! What wonder that managers are chary of the slightest departure from the beaten track, when this is the encouragement they receive from the very men who are loudest in calling for innovation!

The real offender is Shakespeare—Mr. Shaw half confesses as much. What he says is: The play is so inferior that only perfect acting could render it entertaining. What he really feels is: The play so outrages all my most cherished principles that no acting in the world could make it endurable to me. Here are his words:

“Everything that charm of style, rich humour, and vivid and natural characterisation can do for a play is badly wanted by *Henry IV.*, which has neither the romantic beauty of Shakespeare’s earlier plays [it is almost certainly earlier than *As You Like It* and *Twelfth Night*] nor the tragic greatness of his later

ones. One can hardly forgive Shakespeare quite for the worldly phase in which he tried to thrust such a Jingo hero as his Harry V. down our throats. . . . His popularity is like that of a prize-fighter ; nobody feels for him as for Romeo or Hamlet. Hotspur, too, though he is stimulating as ginger cordial is stimulating, is hardly better than his horse ; and King Bolingbroke, preoccupied with his crown exactly as a miser is preoccupied with his money, is equally useless as a refuge for our affections, which are thus thrown back undivided on Falstaff, the most human person in the play, but none the less a besotted and disgusting old wretch."

There you have it ! Mr. Shaw abjures even the semblance of æsthetic appreciation. He applies to each character in succession the touchstone of his anti-monarchical, anti-oligarchical, anti-Jingo, anti-carnivorous, anti-alcoholic principles, and of course finds them all deplorably wanting. Observe, I say his "principles," not his "prejudices"; for it so happens that, in the main, I share them myself, and our own prejudices are always principles. But are we 'never to get outside the grating of our principles, and snatch a moment of unprincipled delight in the splendid pageant of humanity ? For my part, I have long ago given up as a bad job the attempt to convert Shakespeare to my "views." I have long ago ceased to look to the author of *Coriolanus* for an enlightened sympathy with democratic ideals, or to the adaptor of *The Taming of the Shrew* for advanced opinions on the woman question. I have even ceased to regret

the circumstance that Shakespeare was a man of his age, and in some respects not the most far-seeing man of his age. That does not hinder him from being the greatest poet of all time, who has left us, in his plays, an inexhaustible reservoir of essential humanity. Take this play for example : have we not in Prince Hal the classic statement, or rather embodiment, of the famous "wild-oats theory"? It is not my own theory ; personally, I despise and reject it, perhaps as strongly as Mr. Shaw does. I am not even sure that it was Shakespeare's theory ; the question how far Prince Hal represented Shakespeare's ideal, even his momentary ideal, is a nice one for discussion. None the less, in my unregenerate soul, do I take pleasure in seeing the theory so vividly exemplified, and in getting into touch with the patriotic sentiment—the Jingoism, if you will—of the Elizabethan public. Moreover, unadmirable as is much of Prince Harry's conduct, he has moments of a very high generosity and chivalry, which give me pleasure on their own account. Are we to tolerate no hero whose character is not heroic all through? Hotspur, again, is the immortal type of the feudal warrior, Anglo-Norman variety. Mr. Shaw says he is "hardly better than his horse." I don't know that he is any better ; I don't know what "better" means in this context. But I do know that if his horse had such temper, humour, effervescent individuality, combined with such inimitable vivacity

of expression, I should consider his horse a most delightful animal. As for Falstaff—well, Falstaff is of course indefensible. He is a thoroughly unedifying, detrimental old party. From the point of view of the Brick Lane Branch of the United Grand Junction Ebenezer Temperance Association (with whose aims, let me assure Mr. Shaw, I sincerely sympathise), there is not a word to be said in his favour. Yet somehow I can spend a very happy afternoon with him. Such is the laxity of my moral fibre that it is only by deliberate afterthought that I recognise in him a “besotted and disgusting old wretch.” In a word, I cannot discover that these characters need anything to “save them from the unpopularity of their unlovableness and the tedium of their obviousness.” I don’t find them either unbearably unlovable or tediously obvious; and as Falstaff and Hotspur have notoriously been for centuries among the most popular of Shakespeare’s creations, it appears that the unsophisticated mass of mankind thinks and feels with me. Mr. Shaw, being of finer clay, can take no pleasure in these unprincipled persons. Finding himself merely bored and disgusted, he shrinks from the conclusion that the fault is entirely Shakespeare’s; and the idea that it may be partly his own is of course out of the question. There remains only one quarter in which the blame can be laid, and there he proceeds to pile it up sky-high. It is the actors

who are—like doctors, lawyers, soldiers, sailors, tinkers, tailors, and in fact the immense majority of mankind—a set of incompetent charlatans. “The man who says that their work is skilled work has neither eyes nor ears; the man who mistakes it for intelligent work has no brains; the man who finds it even good fun may be capable of Christy Minstrelsy, but not of Shakespeare.”

Now I venture to suggest that this machine-gun style of criticism, mowing alike the stage and the auditorium, and leaving Mr. Shaw in sole and undivided possession of eyes, ears, brains, and capacity for Shakespeare, is not the highly skilled work we have the right to expect of him. It is, as I hinted above, grossly inopportune. It flies to extreme and imaginary standards—to ideals of perfection non-existent within the critic’s experience—in order to depress and crush earnest effort. Its effect, so far as it has any, can only be paralysing. And, by the critic’s own showing, it is wildly overstated. Of the two leading characters in the play—Falstaff and Hotspur—he admits, grudgingly and carpingly indeed, but unequivocally, that one was well played. He objects to Mr. Lewis Waller’s conventional “crosses,” and possibly with justice. I do not find them so conventional in Hotspur, who is restlessness personified, as they would be in some other characters. But, suppose they are merely con-

ventional, the convention is doubtless as old as Shakespeare himself, and springs from an instinctively-felt necessity in this conventional type of drama. Without experiment, I am not prepared to say that it could advantageously be dispensed with. Mr. Shaw has no doubt on the point, and he may be right. But, after all, what a trifling offset to the magnificent vitality of Mr. Waller's performance! Mr. Shaw further remarks that Mr. Waller was apt to pitch his outbursts too high from the start, so that he had to overstrain himself in order to avoid anti-climax. The observation is true enough; but, instead of making reasonable allowance for the nervousness of a first performance, Mr. Shaw jumps to the conclusion that "our miserable theatre has left Mr. Waller a novice," and recommends him to study—Mozart! I am the last to defend "our miserable theatre" as a training-school for poetic acting; but surely the just conclusion to be drawn from this brilliant performance is that, in spite of "our miserable theatre," Mr. Waller has somehow managed to make himself an almost ideal Hotspur.

But the full weight of the critical pole-axe is reserved for Mr. Tree's Falstaff. Finding his own wit inadequate to the expression of his contempt, Mr. Shaw adapts, and does not improve, a somewhat hackneyed saying of Mrs. Poyser's: "Mr. Tree only wants one thing to make him an excellent Falstaff,

and that is to get born over again as unlike himself as possible." Again I say, adopting, for the nonce, Mr. Shaw's own acrobat-ideal, this is not skilled work. Even if the estimate were essentially right, the wording is so obviously excessive as to defeat its own purpose. Coming to details, Mr. Shaw objects to "the basketwork figure, as expressionless as that of a Jack-in-the-Green," and "the voice, coarsened, vulgarised and falsified without being enriched or coloured." From where I sat, Mr. Tree's figure seemed to me quite plausible, but perhaps Mr. Shaw's inventive genius might devise a better method of stuffing. Only, if he invents ("Oh, abhorrent miracle!" as Stevenson would say) an "expressive" paunch, he will distinctly outdo nature. Has he ever observed a gross, fat man, a tun of flesh, the Tichborne Claimant for example, in the days of his prosperity? Can he have failed to notice that the hideousness of the spectacle lies precisely in the fact that the corporation seems inert, inorganic, a grotesque and "expressionless" excrescence? As for the voice, I can only say that it seemed to me admirably rich and mellow, inquiring at the same time why unlimited soaking in sack and sugar should be expected to refine a gentleman's voice. But this pitting of impression against impression is, I admit, unprofitable. It is where Mr. Shaw advises Mr. Tree to "hand over his part and his breadbasket

to Mr. Lionel Brough" that he really gives away his case. Mr. Brough's Bardolph, it appears, "had the true comic force which Mr. Tree never attains for a moment." Now Mr. Brough's Bardolph was amusing, but its humour was absolutely elementary. It lay in a persistent harping on the one string of drawling, open-mouthed stolidity which Mr. Brough (a capital low-comedian) carries through all his parts. The man who can find a potential Falstaff in this boorish Bardolph will next find a potential Hogarth in the creator of Ally Sloper. Amazingly wide of the mark, too, is the suggestion that Mr. Tree is a "romantic imaginative actor, touching only in unhappy parts, making hopeless efforts to play the comedian by dint of mechanical horseplay." This is a very apt description of another eminent actor's incursions into farce; but who that has followed Mr. Tree's career with attention can doubt that, whatever else he may be, a comedian he is? His Falstaff, on the first afternoon, was not as good as I have no doubt it has by this time become; but it was far too good to justify, or even excuse, Mr. Shaw's untimely and inhuman *Berserker*gang.

I should have liked to say something of Mr. Shaw's acrobat-ideal of accomplishment in acting, which I take to be misleading; but that must keep for another occasion.

XXII.

“MAGDA”—“THE QUEEN’S PROCTOR”—“JOSIAH’S
DREAM”—“MAM’ZELLE NITOUCHE.”

10th June.

IN the first place, let me warmly applaud the Lyceum management for taking the only intelligent course with regard to Sudermann’s *Heimat*,* and presenting it in what the playbill calls a “faithful translation.” There was really nothing else to be done; but, until recently at any rate, managers would have found something else to do. It is an encouraging sign of the times that Messrs. Robertson and Harrison, the first English managers to come actually to close quarters with Sudermann, should have recognised that they have here no patent reversible French toy to play with, but a drama whose whole meaning and possibility lies in its original environment. Our time-dishonoured habit of adapting from the French has created a sort of no-man’s-land, having for its capital a purely imaginary Theatropolis, to whose conventions and make-believes we are all accustomed. It does not in the least surprise us to see Frenchmen masquerading under English names in a city which pretends to be London, but is plainly Paris. We

* June 3—19.

come to the theatre prepared for these anomalies; some of us, nowadays, prepared to resent them; others philosophically content to undo the adaptor's work, and mentally restore the action and characters to their native soil; while others, again, and these the majority—but, I believe, a diminishing one—are careless of all absurdities and incongruities, if only the situations, in the abstract, be thrilling or mirth-moving. But this Theatropolis is essentially a compromise between Paris and London. There is nothing of Berlin about it, and still less of a minor German city. The attempt to import German manners and habits of thought into this system of convention could only result in such flagrant unreality as would shock even the most unobservant. It is no secret that an adaptation of Sudermann's first play, *Die Ehre*, by a well-known hand, has long been awaiting production, the scene being transferred, if I am correctly informed, from Berlin to Hampstead. For aught I know, this transference may have been executed with miraculous ingenuity; and no one who has seen the original, with its contrast between the *Vorderhaus* and the *Hinterhaus*, which has no sort of analogy in English life, can doubt that miraculous ingenuity would be required. But whatever the merits of the adaptation, we see that in five or six years it has found no opening, though *Die Ehre* is in itself more human and more theatrically effective

than *Heimat*. The moral is clear enough : a foreign play which is in the least degree true to life will not bear transplantation to the Anglo-French no-man's-land of theatrical convention, but must be faithfully translated or respectfully let alone. Even managers are beginning to realise this.

"But, hold!" the impenitent adaptor may say, "You are hallooing before you are out of the wood. When Mr. Louis Parker's faithful translation of *Magda* has run two hundred and fifty nights, it will be time enough to proclaim the triumph of this lofty principle." I decline to submit the principle to the long-run test. *Magda*, I daresay, will serve the purpose of the management well enough; but it is absurd to look for another *Trilby* in a gloomy play, not illumined by any very brilliant acting, and produced, towards the fag-end of the season, at a theatre which, as every one knows, must soon pass into other hands. For my part, I should not have been inconsolable if Messrs. Robertson and Harrison had chosen the second of the two courses open to them and let *Magda* respectfully alone. I have long ago expressed my feeling that the play is too German in motive and sentiment to become widely popular in England. It would be a miracle, and not a very desirable miracle, if it did, unless transfigured by such acting as raises any work of any nation to the universal-human plane. We have seen *Magda* so

transfigured, and we can never forget it. At the Lyceum, on the other hand, it is simply an illustration by somewhat embarrassed English actors of a very disagreeable and to us almost incredible phase of German family life. The artistic experiment is highly interesting, and can only redound to the credit of the management. It may or may not redound equally to their profit; but they may be sure that from an adaptation neither profit nor credit would have accrued to them. If the hideous military pharisaism of old Schwartz seems to us almost incredible even in Germany, with the sacred *eikon* of the Kaiser oleographically lowering over the scene, how could it possibly be made credible, conceivable, or tolerable, if the action were transferred to England?

I need not repeat the estimate of Sudermann in general, and *Magda** in particular, which I stated at some length about this time last year. There is a sort of hammer-and-tongs vigour in the principal scenes of the play, which explains the attraction it possesses for the two great actresses of our time. It is indeed a first-rate acting play, as no one can doubt who has seen either Duse as Magda, or Herr Klein as Schwartz. But, by any high standard, a great play it is not; it lacks both psychological delicacy and technical skill. Magda herself is crudely obvious except where she becomes weakly inconsistent; and

* *Theatrical World of 1895*, p. 193.

Pastor Heffterdingk, who is in reality the mainspring of the action (since but for his smug sentimentalities Magda would have followed the dictates of her common-sense, and all would have been well), seems to me a total and undisguised failure. The moment Magda realises that he is not animated by direct and primary self-interest, she practically grovels at his feet! She may be a great singer, but I would not stake much on her powers as an actress if her insight into the springs of human character stops short at this childish antithesis between the "interested" and the "disinterested." The seraphic Pastor, in a word, makes a ludicrously easy conquest; never did man pose as a woman-tamer at a cheaper rate. There runs through all this side of the play a strain of commonness which does nothing to relieve the unpleasant impression produced by the base inhumanity—I can find no other term for it—of the father's attitude. Much the best scenes, to my thinking (and they were those in which Duse rose to her sublimest heights), are the passages between Magda and Von Keller. Here we have the ironic and passionate working-out of an eternal problem, and are neither wearied by vapid clericalism on the one hand, nor exasperated by senile militarism on the other.

It must be said for Mrs. Patrick Campbell as Magda that she really took hold of the part and tried

to act it, instead of gracefully evading and toying with it, as she has hitherto done with all her characters except those which she has studied under Mr. Pinero's guidance. Hitherto she has relied upon her beauty and her grace, the curious and semi-foreign elegance of her diction, and the rich reserve of popularity she stored up in Mrs. Tanqueray. She seems instinctively to have realised that, for some time at any rate, a policy of masterly inactivity was all that was required of her. So long as she did nothing unbeautiful, nothing that positively shocked people, but simply recited her parts with a sort of delicate languor, the faithful public would continue to acclaim her. In Magda, whether spurred on by emulation or carried away by sympathy, she has departed from this policy, and made a sincere and strenuous endeavour to play the part. The effort was so far successful that in some of the quieter passages she struck a note of genuine feeling that has hitherto been rare in her work. But the general effect produced was one of insufficiency—insufficient imagination, physical power, and technical skill. She has not so imagined herself into the character as to play it with any natural impetus or rhythm. She has taken each speech by itself, and studied how to make a particular effect with it; but she omits all those minute sub-indications of feeling which give to acting the continuity of real experience and convert recita-

tion into creation. In the emotional outbursts, again, the tenuity of her voice made itself painfully felt—that shrillness which gives a monotonous effect of scolding to almost every utterance of the slightest vehemence. Nor did her facial expression respond to the varied calls made upon it. At times she seemed to rely not so much on her features, as on studied disarrangements of hair, for the portrayal of her mental paroxysms. Finally, she showed a curious lack of skill in graduating her effects, repeatedly striking twelve at eleven-thirty, so to speak, or in other words reaching her top note too soon, and straining every nerve in a frantic effort to keep up to that level. The performance as a whole was certainly less inadequate than some of her previous essays—her *Fédora*, for example, or her *Juliet*—yet, with every disposition to refrain from crushing comparisons, and not demand what the highest genius alone can give, I cannot persuade myself that Mrs. Campbell even interpreted the author's obvious intentions, or did justice to the plain possibilities of the part.

Mr. Forbes Robertson was by far the best Heffterdingk we have seen ; but the excellence of his acting only threw into relief the poverty of the character. Mr. Fernandez gave a vigorous, rough-hewn, conventional rendering of the dear old Lieutenant-Colonel. He was better than the Italian *Schwartzæ*,

Signor Mazzanti, but he was nowhere within measurable distance of Herr Adolf Klein. Mr. Scott Buist played Von Keller very cleverly, though on rather too small a scale. A somewhat more pompous and consequential exterior would be to the advantage of the part. Miss Alice Mansfield was amusing as the maiden aunt, Franziska, and Miss Sarah Brooke played Marie with sincerity, intelligence, and charm. Mr. Louis Parker's translation, by the way, though not at all too "faithful," was now and then too literal. For instance, when old Schwartze says "Eitelkeit, die frisst uns ratzenkahl," Mr. Parker spares us "bald as a rat," but says "Vanity eats every hair off your head," which is neither an English idea nor an English expression. It would surely have been better to find a vernacular equivalent. What we want is the spirit of the scene, not a sidelight on German proverbial philosophy. Every here and there a touch of sandpaper might have removed some little roughness of this description. At the end of the second act it is surely a mistake to make the Pastor say, "She will *confess* all." It is true that "gestehn" means "to confess"; but the English word implies an assumption of guilt on Magda's part which the Pastor at this point would be careful to avoid, especially in speaking to old Schwartze. Would not "She will tell all" represent his meaning more accurately?

The Anglo-French no-man's-land aforesaid holds the stage at the Royalty, in Mr. Herman Merivale's ingenious adaptation of *Divorçons!* entitled *The Queen's Proctor*.* The original is followed so closely that there really seems to be no reason why the adaptation should not have been a frank translation. That is what we shall presently come to, for *Divorçons!* is one of the classic farces of the century, and is like to hold the stage this many a day. In the meantime, Mr. Merivale has thought of a simple and ingenious device for transferring the scene to England. If it must needs be done at all, I don't know that it could be better done. The advantage of making the wife and the lover Italians is not, indeed, apparent; but where all is unreal, this little added touch of unreality is neither here nor there. Much more objectionable is the old-fashioned futility of giving sub-titles to the acts: "Full Cry," "Crossing the Scent," "Run to Earth"; and the antediluvian foolishness of calling an Irish character "The O'Paque," or, rather, making him an Irishman in order that he may be so denominated. For the rest, a surprising amount of the full-flavoured wit of the original is retained in the adaptation, Mr. Redford being evidently determined to act up to the late Laureate's ideal, and let

"Freedom broaden slowly down
From precedent to precedent."

* June 2—July 31.

The delight of the evening was Miss Violet Vanbrugh's somewhat undisciplined but immensely spirited and humorous performance of Cyprienne—who cares to remember her pseudonym? Miss Vanbrugh is rapidly going ahead. I wish the same could be said of Mr. Bouchier; but his performance of the husband was not nearly as good as his gay Lothario in *The Chili Widow*. In the last two acts, however, he was passable. The only other performance of any note was Mr. Mark Kinghorne's original and amusing sketch of a melancholy Scotch waiter.

Let me merely put on record the production at the Strand of a farce named *Josiah's Dream*,* by Mr. Charles Rogers, and the revival at the Court of *Mam'zelle Nitouche*,† under Miss May Yohé's management. The farce is a piece of harmless but pointless folly, one act of which consists of a dream-presentation of life in A.D. 2001—there is nothing like accuracy in dates. The comic opera has degenerated into a rough-and-tumble absurdity, with musical interludes of a music-hall type, in which Miss May Yohé, aided and abetted by Mr. L. Mackinder, Mr. Arthur Playfair, Mr. Robert Pateman, and Miss Florence Levey, abandoned herself to a series of gambols which highly amused the audience, but stood in no definable relation to musical or histrionic art.

* May 21—June 10.

† June 1—July 31.

XXIII.

"THE GREATEST OF THESE"—"CARMEN"—SARAH
BERNHARDT — "THE SUNBURY SCANDAL" —
"PLAYING THE GAME."

17th June.

WHEN last I had occasion to deal with Mr. Sydney Grundy in these columns, he complained that my treatment of him was unchivalrous. Well—it was. I plead guilty. I took a mean advantage of him. I examined his principles in the light of his practice, which is always an unhandsome thing to do. Mr. Grundy had elaborated a theory of great, though melancholy, beauty, by aid of a set of algebraic abstractions, plays figuring as "rabbits," critics as "stove-pipes," and a spell of bad "business" as the crack of doom. In order to show that the theory did not work out in practice, I translated Mr. Grundy's algebra into plain English, and substituted for his symbolic "rabbits" the names of several of his own plays. Now this, I admit, was a little unfair. The moral basis of civilisation would totter if our principles were assailable through the weak spots in our practice. But what lured me aside from strict dialectical probity was the fact that Mr. Grundy's practice is almost always much better than his principles. While he is shouting "Stop her!

Back her!" he turns the crank to "Full speed ahead!" Is it so very unchivalrous to remind a man who is arguing like Falstaff, that yesterday he was fighting like Hotspur, and will be again to-morrow?

To-morrow has now come, and, sure enough, here is Mr. Grundy gallantly, almost quixotically, knocking his own theories into a cocked-hat. *The Greatest of These*, produced at the Garrick last Wednesday,* was not new to me, as it was to most of the audience who were entertained and moved by it. I saw it in Brighton some months ago, and need not repeat what I then said of it.† The three points to which I objected—the hackneyed forgery story, the question-begging juggle with the words "God" and "Nature," and the Ciceronian rhetoric of the dialogue—still appear to me open to objection. But I enjoyed the play more on seeing it a second time, and was more impressed by the courage which inspires it. Pharisaism has received no more crushing facer on the English stage in our time—all the more crushing because it is not malignant or inhuman. There is power, intelligence, conviction in the play. In spirit, if not in technique, it is eminently "in the movement." And will Mr. Grundy tell me that he wrote it under the belief that "the only opinion worth regarding is the opinion of the public"? If he says so, I must, gently but firmly, decline to believe him.

* June 10—July 18. † *Theatrical World of 1895*, p. 374.

He did not write *The Greatest of These* to please the public; he wrote it to please himself. He gave no thought to the public; he simply liberated his soul, and, in doing so, found his exceeding great reward. If he tells me that the old-fashioned technique, at least, was a concession to the alleged requirements of the great public, again I tell him that I know better. It is part of his own artistic ideal, to which he has in this case been absolutely faithful. Though myself a heretic, I respect his tenacious orthodoxy. He may—no doubt he does—believe that the public prefers the “well-made play” to the better-made play; but it was because he himself prefers it, because that is the art he understands and loves to practise, that he constructed the framework of his play on the old lines. And how has he clothed that framework? Did he say to himself: “If the public is thoughtless and vulgar, then thoughtlessness and vulgarity are the factors of the problem I have to solve; if the public says, we will not take seats to watch the laborious analysis of character in the theatre, the laborious analysis of character must return to the novel, from whence it came?” Not a bit of it. He knew very well—or at any rate he believed—that the public was thoughtless: he gave it the best of his thoughts. He knew that it hated to be preached at: he preached at it with all his might. He knew that it was impatient of “laborious analysis of character”: he gave it, if not laborious

analysis, at least leisurely and detailed synthesis. Again and again he suspended the action—for which alone the public is understood to yearn—while some social or moral question was being deliberately thrashed out. In short, he calmly ignored the (real or imaginary) demands of the bugbear public, and wrote simply to satisfy himself. Or rather, to put it more accurately, he wrote, as every artist must, for an ideal audience—for those who think, who feel, who know; and I should not be surprised if, in his mental picture of that ideal audience, certain familiar faces stood out from the featureless mass. I do not believe that in his secret soul he disdained the applause of those "notorious cranks and egotists," those "enthusiastic eccentrics," whom he has since accused of "an innate distaste for everything dramatic." On the contrary, I am convinced that he braved the disapprobation of the multitude in order to merit the approbation of the few. He has done so, and I am sure he does not regret it. Another *Bells of Haslemere* might have been more immediately profitable; but the writing of it would have bored him, the performance humiliated him, and the success left him in a lower and more precarious position among his fellow-craftsmen. *The Greatest of These* has been a joy and not a drudgery to him, has won him the esteem of the men he esteems, the denunciation of those he despises, and has once more brought him

shoulder to shoulder with the strongest of his rivals. Does even his bank-book reproach him, I wonder? I think not; and if it does, it is a very short-sighted bank-book, even where its own interests are concerned.

No, no, Mr. Grundy! it is useless, it is suicidal, to try back. There are many men who can do the bad work better than you can; stick to the good work, to work that satisfies yourself, and pleases, if it does not wholly satisfy, the men who are worth pleasing, and you will find far fewer and less formidable competitors. Banish permanently from your mind (as you did for the moment in writing this play) the fear of offending, and the hope of conciliating, the "thoughtless and vulgar" public. You and your fellow-artists, I and my fellow-critics, have this many years been making a public which (in spite of occasional relapses) is neither entirely thoughtless nor utterly vulgar. We must go on as we have begun if there is to be any future for the English theatre in which a self-respecting man may bear a part. Thoughtlessness and vulgarity are the enemies, not the conditions, of progress. Do not let us go about to make terms with them in the first moment of discouragement. And, above all things, let us show a solid front, and not wrangle in sight of the enemy. Criticism, I know, is sometimes obtuse, and often irritating,



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and the unwritten law which forbids an author to answer such of his critics as are worth answering seems to me foolish and deplorable. Discuss, defend your work as much and as warmly as you please; neither you nor I would be at all at home in a mutual admiration society. We must all make mistakes, both playwrights and critics, and I wish we could have perfect frankness, on both sides, in pointing them out. But that is a very different thing from breaking up the little phalanx by proclaiming, with a flourish of trumpets, that both right and might are on the side of the enemy, and that those who would continue the campaign are traitors trying to lure you to your doom. Years ago you put a weapon in the hands of the adversary by inventing, and uttering with a sneer, that vague and inaccurate term, "the problem-play." Since then you have industriously, and in the main successfully, devoted yourself to the production of the very plays you sneered at—and the last is *The Greatest of These*. The greatest as yet, I should say, for I have not the least doubt that your practice will continue to shame the pusillanimity of your principles. You and I are not so young as we once were; only the other day I was charmed to find myself cited as "a veteran" in opposition to that giddy youth, Mr. Bernard Shaw. But, if you will allow me to say so in all sincerity,

The Greatest of These is the youthfulest of your works. It is youthful in its sentiment and enthusiasm, youthful in its rhetoric, youthful in its sacrifice of technical pedantries to the craving for fervid expression. It is the work of a growing mind, in which the sap runs full and free; and not till the mind begins to shrink and wither have we really felt the touch of age. Go on, then, and prosper. Believe me, whether you like it or not, we are all in the same boat—all, that is to say, who have taken any share in the dramatic movement of the past ten years. We cannot put about and straggle back again. We may, for the moment, have to fight against a head-wind, but it will chop round presently. Help us to put on steam and hurtle through the cyclone, instead of starting a panic-stricken search for Jonahs to throw overboard.

It was pleasant to welcome Mrs. Kendal back again to London in such a strong and living character. And it was doubly pleasant to see, for once in a way, an actress who can act, who knows what she wants to do, and does it. It is true that Mrs. Kendal is a little mannered and a little stagey; it is true that Mr. Grundy's climaxes and antitheses betrayed her now and then into a tone of declamation that was oratorical rather than dramatic; but it is no less true that she played with force, fire, and feeling, and a perfect mastery of her means

of expression which we had almost ceased to think possible on the English stage. Here was neither elegant helplessness nor mannerism incarnate; here was a real woman throwing herself with the ardour of sympathetic conviction, and the ease of consummate accomplishment, into a living, suffering, palpitating character. I, for one, beg to thank Mrs. Kendal for a truly stimulating performance. It was like a breath, or rather a gust, of fresh 'air. Mr. Kendal was excellent in the part of the pachydermatous Pharisee, which is one of the strongest characters on the contemporary stage. Mr. Nutcombe Gould was rather too dry for the romantic Philip Curzon, a personage who is, as Mr. Max Beerbohm would say, "a trifle 1860." Mr. Kemble seemed to be a little bewildered by the Rev. Luke Dormer; and I do not wonder at it, for the character is distinctly the weakest in the play—perpetually wobbling between genial open-mindedness and the basest bigotry. The younger Armitages are cleverly played by two members of Mr. Kendal's provincial company—Mr. Rodney Edgcumbe and Miss Nellie Campbell.

The unexampled unanimity of the press with regard to Miss Olga Nethersole's *Carmen** leaves me little to say on what is at best a painful subject. The whole undertaking was a melancholy error of taste

* *Gaiety*, June 6—20.

and of judgment. Yet one cannot but feel a certain sympathy with Miss Nethersole. She has fallen a victim to that cruel injustice in the constitution of things which is expressed in the proverb, "One man may steal the horse, while another must not look over the hedge." Exactly the same unbridled effect-hunting, exactly the same vulgarity of spirit, has inspired the majority of Sarah Bernhardt's achievements for the past ten years or so. Mr. Henry Hamilton, indeed, is not Sardou—he lacks the mechanical ingenuity and, above all, the scenic tact of that consummate sensation-monger; but though their mere craftsmanship may place *Théodora*, *La Tosca*, and *Gismonda* on a somewhat higher level than *Carmen*, their method and their appeal are essentially the same. Why, then, may Madame Bernhardt steal the horse, while Miss Nethersole must not look over the hedge? Simply because the world is so constituted, and it behoves us, at our peril, to recognise and acquiesce in our personal limitations. Sarah knows how to dissemble, by a thousand arts and graces, the essential vulgarity of her effort; Miss Nethersole can only monotonously flaunt it, even in the photographs which make eyes at us from the tavern-windows, before we enter the theatre. Every wisp of her raven locks, every tint of her sultry complexion, proclaims its seductive purpose, and thereby sacrifices its effect. The long-drawn sameness of her

crude coqueties and calculated audacities gets on the nerves of the audience before the languid action is well begun. One comes to foresee and shrink from every whisk of her skirts; after the first act, the only unforeseen effects are those which are incredible. None but the actress who lay flat on her back and hugged the Bible in the third act of *Mrs. Ebbsmith* could have conceived the exit on all-fours in the third act of *Carmen*. Third acts seem to be inauspicious to Miss Nethersole. There is no doubt, however, that she has real talent, if she could find some one with a little taste to discipline it. And if she is ever to fulfil the promise of some of her earlier efforts, she must, above all things, be careful of her diction. Not only has she taken to speaking with her mouth shut in a curious muffled voice, but she has also acquired a number of painfully stagey mispronunciations. She says, for instance: "A can, A do"; "Yuss, uf yu'll buy me a pair of earrings"; "A ravun flew over my head and—crokt"; and she pronounces "bull" as though it rhymed with "Hull." These are graces of speech which will repay careful avoidance.

Of Madame Bernhardt* as Adrienne Lecouvreur,

* Between June 8 and June 20 Madame Bernhardt gave twelve evening and four afternoon performances at the Comedy Theatre, playing *Adrienne Lecouvreur* five times, *Magda* twice, *La Tosca* five times, *Fédora* twice, and *La Dame aux Camélias* twice.

what can one possibly say that has not been said a thousand times already? Let me only note that she has passed through a somewhat trying period of transition in her personal appearance, and is now frankly and placidly—opulent. Her art seemed to me as great as ever, her nature and her feeling distinctly less. I have, unfortunately, not been able to see her Magda, but hope to have an opportunity next week. Her company is rather above than below the average. Their names I do not know, as I did not think it worth while to ascertain them at the cost of sixpence. I admit that we deadheads have less cause than the paying public to complain of this preposterous tax. What I personally object to is the capricious suspension, without any warning, of an established custom. My haughty soul resents the humiliation of begging for a scrap of paper and being refused. I don't mind banging my sixpence with a lordly air if I have been given fair warning and time to rehearse the part; but I dislike being betrayed into playing the humble press man in vain, and so banging both my sixpence and my self-respect.

A farce by Mr. Fred Horner, entitled *The Sunbury Scandal*,* and a "musical comedy" by Messrs. Willie Younge and Arthur Flaxman, entitled *Playing the Game*,† have been produced at Terry's and the Strand respectively. Neither calls for the slightest notice.

* June 11—16.

† June 12—17.

XXIV.

"THE SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL."

24th June.

THE next time *The School for Scandal** is revived, how would it be if, just for the fun of the thing, it were to be re-studied as well? It has not been studied within the memory of man, and consequently it has not been acted, but only mimicked over and over again, each time with a little further forcing of the note. No doubt this is an inevitable phase in the fortunes of a comedy of manners; but I think it is time we should have done with this phase and get on to the next. For some five-and-twenty or thirty years after the production of such a play, it passes as a picture of contemporary life, and is played in the costumes of the moment, though already, towards the end of that period, the manners depicted have become flagrant anachronisms. Thus we still play *Caste* in the dress of to-day, and though Mr. Wyndham has re-dressed *London Assurance* in the fashions of the forties, Mr. Hare omitted to follow his example in the case of *Money*. It is known (though I cannot lay my hand on the reference) when *The School for Scandal*, produced in 1777, was first revived as a "costume

* Lyceum, June 20—July 24.

play." I have a portrait of Charles Kemble as Charles Surface, wearing the dress of his own day ; and so late as 1844 Macready played Joseph in a frock-coat and trousers—but that was in America. No doubt the change was generally made about the date of Sheridan's death, 1816. So soon, in any case, as a play is recast in historic costume, the actors set about sedulously storing up every available reminiscence, tradition, and caricature of the manners of the period in question. One or two of the original actors probably survive, others live in the memories of the older stagers among the new generation ; and an elaborate system of mimicry is presently developed, so that each part comes to be regarded, not as a character for the actor to embody by means of observation, imagination, and study, but as an assemblage of comic affectations, totally unrelated to reality, which the actor must mechanically reproduce in such a way as to get the traditional laughs at the consecrated points. The performance is no longer a piece of living art, but a sort of sacred ritual, a great deal of which has entirely lost its original dramatic significance. Acting, under these circumstances, becomes soulless virtuosity at best ; at worst, senseless grimacing. And as mimicry always tends towards excess, the parts, as they are handed on from generation to generation, or rather from actor to actor, become ever more thickly encrusted in absurdities. By dint of

mere whim, or even of misguided research, every actor adds his stitch to the embroidery which must presently conceal every inch of the original fabric. I could not but see a symbol of this tendency in the emerald and diamond brooch which Mr. Cyril Maude, on Saturday night, had contrived to stick in the front of Sir Benjamin Backbite's wig. No doubt he or his costumier has found such a brooch in some fashion-plate or caricature of the period; but I think his diligence would have been much better expended on trying to recover what Sheridan may conceivably have meant by his tattling fop, than on labouring to pile every possible exaggeration of detail upon the traditional grotesque whom he certainly did *not* mean.

But it would be unjust to blame any individual actor for obeying what is, as I have admitted, an inevitable tendency, and tuning his performance to the key of the whole revival. It lies with the manager to alter the pitch throughout; but it would have to be a manager who should really, so to speak, wield the conductor's bâton, instead of merely playing first fiddle in an orchestra which has to scramble along without any conductor. A manager who should have the leisure and the authority to give effect to his artistic intelligence, would summon his company to the green-room and address them somewhat as follows: "Ladies and gentlemen, *The School for Scandal*, which we are about to revive, was in its

day a representation of the life of its day. The manners are somewhat accentuated no doubt, and the dialogue surcharged with wit, according to the established convention of English comedy; but, making allowance for that convention, society recognised itself in the mirror held up to it. Now I request your co-operation, ladies and gentlemen—and especially yours, Mr. Stage-Manager—in an endeavour to make this play once more a conceivable picture of social life. I propose to discover, as nearly as may be, what costumes were commonly worn by people of fashion of the seventeen-seventies, not to ransack the whole century for every possible extravagance of material and cut, so as to make all the plain gentlemen fops, the fops grotesques, and Lady Sneerwell's at home a replica of Cinderella's ball in the pantomime. As for tradition, I don't ask you to despise or forget it, but I do ask you to help me in discriminating between early, artistic, characteristic traditions, and gradual accumulations of mere clowning. Especially I would urge you to remember that the late eighteenth century was, superficially at any rate, a polite age. Sheridan's characters occasionally say very cutting things to each other; but they are always turned in such a way that they can be, and ought to be, uttered with the most perfect polish and suavity, as though it were not for a moment conceivable that any personal allusion could be intended in them.

Dr. Johnson was notorious for his occasional fits of rudeness; they were exceptional, almost unique, in the society of the day; therefore we must not let Sir Peter Teazle (for example) point his remark about 'qualified old maids and disappointed widows' with a brutal directness from which Johnson would have shrunk. Again, it was an age, no doubt, of self-conscious wit in conversation, and this characteristic Sheridan greatly exaggerated; but we must not on that account represent every member of the Scandalous College as positively straining and perspiring all the time, with the painful tensivity of badly trained athletes, to catch and pass on the ball of wit. We must aim at giving an air of polished ease even to the artificiality of Sheridan's dialogue, and not make it a monotonous alternation of eager, over-emphasised jests and mechanical, mirthless laughter. It is a poor compliment alike to the wit of the author and the intelligence of the audience to imagine that Sheridan's points must be hammered home, as the nail was driven into the brain of Sisera. In short, ladies and gentlemen, we have to deal with a play which has, for the best part of a century, been undergoing a gradual process of de-humanisation. Let us do our best to humanise it again; and I think I can promise you that if we succeed, you shall not lack your reward in the appreciation of the public."

Mr. Forbes-Robertson, it is evident, did not

address this speech, or anything like it, to the members of his company; it was not to be expected that he should. The Lyceum performance is a very fair one, on the old lines; but the point-forcing, the exasperating laughter, and the unmannerliness were certainly carried to extremes. One minute emphasis in the part of Lady Teazle will serve to illustrate my meaning. "When my Cousin Sophy," she says to Sir Peter, "has called you a stiff peevish old bachelor, and laughed at me for marrying one who might be my father, I have always defended you, and said I didn't think you so ugly by any means." Now here the natural emphasis, the emphasis evidently intended, is a slight stress upon *any*. The two are at the height of their reconciliation. Lady Teazle has no wish openly to insult her husband; she merely lets the phrase slip out, as though inadvertently, with a touch of kittenish playfulness, pretending to caress, yet unable to resist giving a little scratch at the same time. Instead of reading the line thus simply, Mrs. Campbell strongly underlines the *so*, making the remark a deliberate affront, and thus securing for herself, and for Mr. Farren in his rueful "Thank you," a crude and unnatural instead of a delicate and natural effect. And this is typical, not only, and indeed not mainly, of Mrs. Campbell's performance, but of the whole production. Everything is coarsely overdrawn, every

bit of comic business dragged out until it becomes a weariness of the flesh. Where Sir Peter begins to talk of Joseph's affair with Maria, and Joseph tries to stop him, lest Lady Teazle should hear, Mr. Farren goes on gabbling and Mr. Forbes-Robertson talking him down, in defiance of all verisimilitude, until the jest has become stale to the point of nauseousness. When Sir Peter is making up his mind to tell Charles about the little French milliner behind the screen, he indulges in such interminable chuckles that Charles has again and again to say "Go on" (the words are not in his part), and one wonders that the audience does not openly second the suggestion. When Mr. Righton, as Sir Oliver, has to speak of "the honest dignity of genius and virtue," he hurls the words at the gallery with such vigour and conviction that the sentiment narrowly escapes a round of applause. Every emphasis, every pause, every attitude, every grimace, is a direct bid for laughter at any cost. Imagine a delicate mezzotint translated into a picture-poster!

Nevertheless there is a great deal of cleverness in some of the individual performances. Mr. Farren's Sir Peter has become a masterpiece of sheer virtuosity; Mr. Fred Terry's Charles is the best we have seen of late years; and Mr. Forbes-Robertson's Joseph, if somewhat superficial, is polished and plausible enough. Miss Rose Leclercq chants the

part of Mrs. Candour very amusingly, and Miss Sarah Brooke makes a pleasant though perhaps rather too diffident Maria. Mrs. Campbell's Lady Teazle is to my thinking much the best thing she has done at the Lyceum. It is a hard and unsympathetic but vigorous performance, very much better than the first sketch she presented at the Wyndham benefit some weeks ago. The petulant, perverse, and shrewish side of Lady Teazle's character Mrs. Campbell brings out to perfection; what we miss is the good-humoured and light-hearted gaiety, the charming irresponsibility, which appears in such speeches as: "Am I to blame, Sir Peter, because flowers are dear in cold weather? You should find fault with the climate and not with me. For my part, I'm sure I wish it was spring all the year round, and that roses grew under our feet!" In the scolding scenes, Mr. Farren found a congenial spirit in Mrs. Campbell, and they literally screamed at each other. It was wrong, to my mind, and unpleasing; but it was ably done. Clearly wrong, too, was Mrs. Campbell's choice of the moment when Sir Peter is announced as coming upstairs to shout at the pitch of her voice, "What will become of me!—Now Mr. Logic!" Here again we see the lack of that imagination which enables the artist to realise and live in a given conjuncture of circumstances. I do not like the tone of undignified invective in which she spoke

the parting words to Joseph: "As for that smooth-tongued hypocrite," etc.; but it might no doubt be defended as in harmony with the tone of the whole revival.

XXV.

"ON THE MARCH"—SIR AUGUSTUS HARRIS.

1st July.

THE chief defect of *On the March*,* a musical comedy produced at the Prince of Wales's last week, is that, whereas the curtain rises at 8.30, the fun does not begin till about 11. If the authors could synchronise things a little better, the piece would do well enough for a summer evening's entertainment. The second act is a sort of magnified *Pantomime Rehearsal*, which becomes really amusing, in a wildly extravagant fashion, towards the close. The confusion between Colonel McAlister and his double is so funny, indeed, that we could have stood a little more of it, if it had come on at a reasonable hour. The first act, on the other hand, is simply an interminable preparation for the second, so elaborately and consistently dull that the only effective way to improve it, I fear, would be to improve it out of existence. "What I ask myself,"

* June 22—September 5.

as Lieutenant Ferris says, is why the piece should be called *On the March*, since nothing and nobody marches in it—least of all the action. Mr. Brookfield is amusing as the phlegmatic lieutenant, and the topical song with the allusions left out which he sings with Mr. Horace Mills is by far the cleverest thing in the play. Mr. Mills works hard, and not unsuccessfully, with the part of Sergeant Struggles, and Mr. Cecil Ramsay is good as the choleric Colonel. Mr. Thomas E. Murray, an American music-hall comedian of the R. G. Knowles type, made a favourable impression in the part of Fitzallerton Scroggs. His humour is quite rudimentary, and makes not the slightest pretence to dramatic appropriateness. For instance, in order that he may introduce a bout of meaningless tomfoolery with a syphon of soda-water, we are asked to conceive that a theatrical manager is totally unacquainted with the uses and properties of that familiar contrivance—surely a “record” feat of make-believe. Mr. Murray’s patter, however, is good-humoured, and for the most part inoffensive, and he shows some dexterity in his business and dancing. Miss Alice Atherton’s nigger-song, “I’ve been Hoo-doo’d,” fell rather flat on the first night, partly, no doubt, because it came so late in the evening, but mainly because most of the audience did not know what it was all about. Mr. Templar Saxe and Miss Maud Boyd, as the hero and heroine, sang and acted

agreeably enough. I have forgotten to mention that *On the March* has attained its present perfection of form through the co-operation of no fewer than six intelligences, or, to be strictly accurate, of six pens. The words are by Messrs. William Yardley, B. C. Stephenson, and Cecil Clay; the music by Messrs. John Crook, Edward Solomon, and Frederic Clay.

Many people must have been astonished, as I was, to learn that Sir Augustus Harris was only forty-four when he died.* He looked at least ten years older, and his prodigious and multifarious activity renders it hard to realise that it is only seventeen years since the Harry Greenlanes of *Pink Dominoes*, a quite inconspicuous young actor and stage-manager, suddenly leaped into the place, if not into the position, of Garrick, Sheridan, Elliston, Macready, and became manager of Drury Lane Theatre. He followed these "great lessees" in a purely chronological sense, but he had little enough ambition to tread in their footsteps. Ambition he had—an hereditary ambition—but its bent was towards the other side of Bow Street. So far as Drury Lane was concerned, his great advantage over his immediate predecessors lay in the fact that he was too young and too practical to be in the least degree hampered by tradition. He called Drury Lane the "National Theatre," but he himself was the last to be imposed on by this grandiloquent misnomer.

* June 22.

He made all possible haste to exorcise and evict the ghosts of the past, which had haunted even F. B. Chatterton and Alfred Bunn. True, he opened with Shakespeare, but that was only because he found a popular and spectacular version of *Henry V.* ready-made to his hand. Whether he had any hope of shining as an actor I do not know; but in any case, after playing Roderigo and Icilius to the Othello and Virginius of John McCullough, and figuring in one or two melodramatic parts, he had the good sense to abandon the stage and devote himself entirely to organisation. During the past fifteen years his career has been like that of the circus-rider who, starting with one horse, is "fed," as it were, with a fresh steed at every round of the ring, until he has half-a-dozen actually under him and is guiding a dozen more by means of a bewildering ramification of reins, which it seems incredible that one pair of hands should control, or even grasp. He was an immense force in the amusement world; the greatest showman, indeed, and by far the most successful, that England has ever produced. In the world of dramatic art (of his services to music I am not qualified to speak) he was a disturbing rather than a guiding influence. He was mainly instrumental in importing East End melodrama into the West, thus checking the beginnings of a somewhat better style of popular drama which seemed to be taking shape at the Princess's. But in this he

was no doubt himself the instrument of an inevitable tendency, and he certainly developed the pictorial side of melodrama with remarkable daring and dexterity. He it was, too, who introduced the system of impoverishing the music-halls at Christmas time, to the questionable enrichment of the stage ; but it must also be said that he, quite literally, "surpassed himself" year by year in the gorgeousness of the spectacles he presented, and that latterly he showed an unmistakable tendency towards refinement as well. His last pantomime was not only the most sumptuous but also the most tasteful of the series. If he did any service to dramatic art, it was indirectly, in giving the hospitality of his theatre to the Meinigen Company and the Comédie Française. What he recognised from the outset, and with perfect justice, was that under present conditions such a building as Drury Lane Theatre is outside the sphere of dramatic art, and ranks, not with the Lyceum and the Haymarket, but with the Alhambra and Olympia. He was in reality, what many have vainly vaunted themselves, a Napoleonic showman ; and he was happier than his prototype in that he did not live to see his Moscow and his Waterloo.

XXVI.

"DOCTOR FAUSTUS."

8th July.

IN reviving *The Tragical History of Dr. Faustus** the Elizabethan Stage Society has at last stumbled on its true vocation. If only it would renounce Shakespeare and all his works (or very nearly all) and devote itself to the other Elizabethans, it should have my unqualified blessing, and even, by'r Lady, my yearly guinea. Shakespeare, after all, manages to get his word in edgewise on the regular stage. He is not always very well played, yet better than by the Elizabethan Stage Society. Some of his works, indeed, are seldom or never produced—such as *Richard II.*, *Coriolanus*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, *The Tempest*—but it would serve no purpose to have them recited by amateurs. If we cannot see them nobly or at least adequately acted, we would rather not see them at all. The methods of the E.S.S. are essentially antiquarian, and suited to curiosities of literature, not to living masterpieces. *The Comedy of Errors* is not a living masterpiece; therefore the E.S.S. performance in Gray's Inn Hall was a very pleasant and memor-

* Performed at St. George's Hall, July 2 (evening), and July 4 (afternoon).

able orgie of antiquarianism. *Love's Labour's Lost* might be treated in the same way, and the promised performance of *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* will of course do no harm, though the play is trivial rather than curious, and has, moreover, been recently revived by Mr. Daly. But I own that I cannot look forward with any great eagerness to *Twelfth Night* in the Middle Temple Hall. Here is a living masterpiece, if ever there was one. It has been frequently played of late, and, on the whole, not ill played. No doubt there is a certain sentimental attraction in the idea of restoring the play to the very surroundings in which Shakespeare himself probably saw it, and possibly took part in it; but if the performance is a feeble one, Shakespeare would be apt to think the sentiment misplaced. Could not Mr. Poel recruit a company of actors and actresses who would, for the nonce, replace his amateurs? On the other hand, this body of intelligent and enthusiastic amateurs might do excellent service in giving costume recitals, under something like Elizabethan conditions, of plays which are impossible, and indeed undesirable, on the regular stage—such plays, in a word, as *Doctor Faustus*. If Mr. Poel would organise a chronological series of performances of representative plays, from the moralities and interludes down to Davenant and Shirley, he would deserve well of the republic of letters. Each performance might be preceded, as is the fashion in

France, by a short lecture, placing the work in question in its due historical relations. Indeed, I do not see why such a series of recitals might not in some way be affiliated to the University Extension system. It would be an enormously efficient agency for promoting the study of Elizabethan literature, and begetting a sane appreciation of a body of writers whom it is very difficult to see in their true proportions. In short, I think the Elizabethan Stage Society would do well to regard itself frankly as an academic rather than a theatrical institution. It may supplement and stimulate the regular stage; it cannot possibly rival or supersede it, even with the cultured few. Let it leave to the theatre the plays which are the theatre's—which are not of an age but for all time—and devote itself to plays which, belonging essentially to their own age, are best illustrated in accordance with its methods.

And now a word with Mr. Poel as to these methods. It is difficult, perhaps impossible, to recover them in their entirety, but on some points there is no room for doubt. We are certain, for example, that the whole business of the stage, whether in tragic or in comic passages, must have been rapid, impetuous and bustling. This we infer, not only from the repeated allusions to two hours as the average duration of a performance, but from what we know of the noisy and turbulent character of the audiences, whose attention

could be held only by violent means. Nay, we have only to read *Doctor Faustus* to see "bustle" written all through it, like the time-signature of a musical stave. Why, then, does Mr. Poel abandon the very citadel of the E.S.S. position, by taking the whole play, rhetoric and low-comedy alike, in the slowest possible time? I don't know whether he ever descends from Elizabethan altitudes to study the Victorian music-halls; in any case, I commend them to his attention, especially those of the lower and rowdier class. Let him note the *attack* of the popular comedians, male and female—how they pull themselves together in the wing, and launch themselves like a thunderbolt upon their audience, so that they are in the very thick of their mugging, capering, gagging, or what not, before one has well realised their presence on the stage. This crispness of attack, this instantaneous and brazen challenging of the attention, without prelude, without apology, is absolutely essential where a restless and noisy audience has to be mastered. Can it be doubted that the Elizabethan actors, and especially the comedians, practised it? Of course it is a difficult accomplishment, not to be acquired off-hand by a company of amateurs; but there is no reason why they should not aim at it, should not try to mimic it. What, then, does Mr. Poel do? He takes his time, not from the Middlesex or the Foresters', but from Westminster

Abbey. He gives to the whole performance the air of an ecclesiastical solemnity. Much of the dialogue is positively intoned; the devils in particular (I presume there is some subtle irony in this) chant their speeches after the fashion of doxologies. Wagner, the conjurer's mountebank, a part evidently designed for the Lionel Brough or Harry Paulton of his day, becomes a staid and solemn acolyte, the pink of sedate propriety. The rough-and-tumble buffoonery of the Pope's banquet is carried on with a ceremonial stateliness which is amusing enough but not even plausibly Elizabethan. Mr. Poel's favourite device of stage-management (he employed it freely in *The Comedy of Errors*) is to introduce a sort of slow quadrille-figure wherever it is possible—a series of meaningless mathematical evolutions which would assuredly have exasperated the groundlings at the Rose or Newington Butts. He may argue that the actual audiences of the E.S.S. being in the highest degree patient and decorous, and quite unprovided with rotten apples or other implements of missile criticism, he is at liberty to indulge his own tastes in the matter of dramatic effect, unawed by the ghosts of the Elizabethan public. But this is clearly a relinquishment of the whole position. These performances lose all their interest when they cease to attempt the reproduction, by diligent study and cautious conjecture, of primitive Elizabethan methods.

And I am sure that Mr. Poel is really desirous of acting up to the ideal of the Society. He has been misled in this instance, I take it, by an unfortunate verse from a contemporary ballad, quoted on the playbill, whence it appears that Alleyn played Faustus in "a surplice with a cross upon his breast." From this cross and surplice Mr. Poel has instinctively deduced, "in a concatenation according," the hieratic tone and time of the whole production. In the interests of sound Elizabethanism, it might perhaps be well if, on future occasions, ladies and gentlemen were requested to provide themselves with rotten apples to throw, or at least with nuts to crack, where the performance seemed in danger of dragging.

"There is no justification," says Mr. Poel in his "Remarks" on the playbill, "for reviving with historic accuracy the middle part of the play, which is not Marlowe's." Though it would be safer to say "not entirely Marlowe's," one could accept this argument for a judicious rearrangement of the quite unconnected and inorganic scenes, but not for unnecessary departures from "historic accuracy" in the manner of presentation. It would of course be too much to insist that women should be entirely excluded from the neo-Elizabethan scene; but it is hard to see why the Seven Deadly Sins should be represented by women, in flat contradiction of the text, which evidently contemplated male monstrosi-

ties, except in the case of "Mistress Minx," the seventh. Nothing could be less plausible than the Botticelli-cum-opera-bouffe costumes of these personages. Mr. Poel ought rather to have gone to Mantegna for his allegorical inspiration. Again, the incandescent lamp concealed under the cowl of Mephistophilis was a flagrant and foolish anachronism; and there was an attempt at historical accuracy in the dresses—the "Maximilian costumes," the uniform of the Papal Guard, and so forth—which was historically *in*accurate in a representation of an Elizabethan playhouse. Mr. Poel had suffered the spirit of the Lyceum and the eighteen-nineties to seduce him from his allegiance to Newington Butts and the fifteen-nineties. Though these petty cavillings may seem a base requital for Mr. Poel's disinterested and indefatigable activity, I am in reality far from ungrateful for the many curious and interesting spectacles which we owe to him. But a devoted student is not necessarily an inspired stage-manager; and I am sure the Elizabethan Stage Society is too sincere in its enthusiasm to shrink from any criticism which may help it to define and realise its aims.

It is perhaps fortunate that I have no space left for a consideration of the play itself, for I fear my view of it verges on the heretical. As to the splendour of its poetry there can be no two opinions. Mr. Swinburne intends no wrong to Chaucer and Spenser,

but speaks what, if closely considered, will be found the exact truth, when he says:

"The music none but English tongue could make,
Our own sole song, spake first when Marlowe spake."

But it is surely an injustice to Marlowe himself to accept *Doctor Faustus* as affording a fair measure of his philosophical or dramatic powers. To my thinking, he did not seriously put forth those powers, but simply rewrote a German popular chapbook for an English popular audience. Yet hear Mr. J. A. Symonds:

"*Doctor Faustus* is more nearly allied in form to the dramatic poems of our own days, which present a psychological study of character to the reader, than any other work of our old theatre. . . . Marlowe left us a picture of the mediæval rebel . . . animated with his own audacious spirit, no longer mythical, but vivified, a living personality. By the side of Faustus he placed the sinister and melancholy Mephistophilis, a spirit who wins souls for hell by the allurements of despair, playing with open cards and hiding no iota of the dreadfulness of damnation. . . . Even the pitiful distractions—pitiful in their leaden dulness and blunt edge of drollery—with which Faustus amuses his worse than Promethean leisure . . . heighten the infernal effect. . . . When the diabolical friar enters, there begins that darkest colloquy, whereby Marlowe seems bent on proving that the powers of evil need no Jesuitry to entice a blinded soul."

And so on through a score of pages! Surely the simple truth is that Marlowe had not as yet either the skill or the will to give philosophic consistency

to Faustus or dramatic plausibility to Mephistophilis. He was an unskilled workman groping among the rudiments of his craft; and even if he had attained miraculous accomplishment at a single bound, it would have been totally thrown away upon a public which was only beginning its dramatic education. There is some reason to believe that Marlowe was, for his time, an "audacious" thinker; but, far from animating Faustus with his own audacity, he throughout gave none but the most conventional and self-contradictory expression to the spirit of scepticism and revolt. This half-heartedness was partly due, no doubt, to defect of skill, partly to prudent regard for his audience and for the Star Chamber. But, whatever the reason, the fact remains that *Doctor Faustus* is just about as "audacious" and "impious" as the *Pilgrim's Progress*.

XXVII.

"THE COUNTESS GUCKI"—"THE LIAR."

15th July.

THE new Schönthan-Daly entertainment at the Comedy Theatre, *The Countess Gucki*,* deserves to rank as a curiosity in theatrical art. It is not a

* July 11—27.

play, it scarcely pretends to be a play; it is simply a contrivance for bringing Miss Rehan on the stage and enabling her to exercise, in the abstract, as it were, those arts of fascination to which we are all such willing slaves. What she gives us can scarcely be called acting, for acting implies the adaptation of means to a pre-determined end, the impersonation of a character, or, it may be, of only a doll—at any rate, in Matthew Arnold's phrase, of "something not ourselves"—whereas in this case there is not even a coherent doll to impersonate. Miss Rehan herself is at once the end and the means. Instead of acting, she simply Rehanises irresistibly for two hours and a half. Please understand that I am not complaining. I use the word "irresistibly" in no conventional sense. Few things delight me more than Miss Rehan Rehanising, when (as in this case) there is no reason why she should do anything else. In some parts—in Katharine and Viola, for instance, and even in some of her modern characters—she does much more than merely Rehanise, and proves herself a great artist. In others, such as Lady Teazle, she Rehanises wrongly, and devastates the play. But here it is the very merit of the play, or at any rate its excuse, that there is not the least reason why she should do anything else than abound in her own sense. The framework for her fascinations is inoffensive; it is not vulgar, it is not degrading, it is quaint and curious to

the eye ; but as drama, as the presentation either of a story or of a character, it simply does not exist. Mr. Daly has carried to its highest possible perfection the star theory of dramatic art. He has distanced Sardou, who seemed hard to beat. When Sardou wants to put Sarah Bernhardt through her paces, he invents an elaborate mechanism, lifeless, but logical in the highest degree—as logical as the cog-wheels of a chronometer—which must be exceedingly troublesome to elaborate, and becomes unspeakably tedious the moment you have once seen it revolving. Perhaps Sardou even flatters himself that he creates characters for Sarah to embody. It is not impossible—for great are the marvels of that odd corner of science, *La Psychologie des Auteurs Dramatiques*—that he thinks of Fédora, La Tosca, and Gismonda as real women, and imagines that he can, in his mind's eye, distinguish them from one another and from Sarah Bernhardt. Mr. Daly, in *The Countess Gucki*, takes no such pains and can be under no such illusion. "Story ! God bless you, he has none to tell, sir ;" and as for character, he cannot possibly imagine that the Countess is anything else than the concentrated essence of Miss Rehan, or at least of her more commonplace fascinations. (I must use this word a third time, for the only synonym that occurs to me—namely, "airs and graces"—conveys a shade of disparagement which I am far from intending.) In

short, Mr. Daly has realised the ideal of what may be called absolute acting—acting unconditioned by either plot or character. But as acting is, in the nature of things, relative, and must be conditioned by plot, or character, or both, it follows that absolute acting is not acting at all, but rather the presentation to an audience of a certain personality, in and for itself. In this case the personality is a very charming one, and we may congratulate Mr. Daly and ourselves upon the new art which he has invented in order to exploit it.

Not till the second act of *The Countess Gucki* do we fully realise that we are face to face with a new thing. Mr. Daly—or is it Schönthan? no, I fancy the adapter is really the informing spirit of the piece as it at present stands—Mr. Daly seems to have set forth with the intention of writing a quite ordinary comedy or farce of intrigue, and in the second half of the first act—the first half is tediously explanatory—the intrigue promises not badly. The ruse by which the Countess makes her irrepressible admirer play *cavalier seul* to the Frau Hofrath on the journey to Eger is ingenious and amusing. One can even divine that in the original German the old Hofrath and his wife, with their crawling snobbishness and abject intriguing for "high protection," must be satirical caricatures of no small spirit and relevance. The first act, in fine, leads us to expect a battle of plot and counterplot, in

which the Countess, after outwitting and humbling the too self-satisfied Lieutenant, should ultimately take him into her good graces. We should thus have had a trivial but possibly clever enough comedy after the manner of Scribe. But before the second act has well begun we see that this expectation is to be—I was going to say, disappointed, but there is no disappointment in the matter. What Mr. Daly gives us is really more interesting, because more novel, than what we expect. Plot and counterplot lapse into nothingness; an old Russian General, absolutely unannounced and unknown, appears on the scene; and, hey, presto! we are in the middle of a plaintive love-idyll between him and the heroine, diversified by outrageously farcical interruptions on the part of the dashing dragoon. To the reader all this doubtless sounds commonplace enough; he wonders where the novelty comes in. It consists simply in this, that we know nothing, literally nothing, and care less, about these people with whom we are suddenly asked to sympathise to slow music. I have said it before, and I say it again—they do not exist for us. Even the most ordinary French vaudevillist will make some attempt to posit his puppets, to give them some superficial characteristics or assign them to some known class, and gradually to awaken our interest in them and their doings. Mr. Daly makes no such effort. The Countess, indeed, we can assign to a known class

—the class of Rehan-heroines. We see that she is gay and bright, and, since Miss Rehan plays her, we assume that she is amiable; but we have no more definite reason for liking her or wishing her well than simply that she is Miss Rehan and Miss Rehan is she. The Lieutenant we know to be good-natured and bad-mannered; the General we know nothing whatever about. Yet we are expected to interest ourselves sympathetically—and, stranger still, we do interest ourselves to a certain degree—in the loves of two phantasms who met the day before, and the sentimental illusions and disillusion of a grey-haired ghost conjured up at a moment's notice for the sake of the situation. A love-scene between Pantaloon and Columbine, punctuated by the Clown with his red-hot poker, would be real and convincing in comparison. Then, when Pantaloon has retired with pathetic dignity, the orchestra begins to croon its tenderest strains while Clown and Columbine exhale their non-existent souls in half-playful, half-pathetic nothings. Yes, literally nothings—the lovers are naught, and what they say is naught, neither subtle, nor passionate, nor ingenious, nor graceful, nor beautiful. But they eke out their nothings with long pauses of portentous significance, and Miss Rehan laughs and frolics and languishes exquisitely, and the fiddles put in a tactful crescendo every here and there to show that the emotion is peculiarly poignant; and though

the characters have not even the make-believe reality of marionettes, and though we do not care two pins about them, yet somehow we are entertained, amused, almost moved, and scarcely realise till the curtain has fallen the spectral emptiness of the whole affair. Miss Rehan has won many greater and worthier triumphs, but none more personal or peculiar to herself.

In the third act, even the elementary and foregone love-interest is exhausted. We know who is to marry who; the declarations are made, the obstacles removed; there is no valid reason why the curtain should have risen a third time, or why it should not drop at any moment. The whole act is an incoherent farrago of semi-comic, semi-sentimental "business." There is no sincerity in the sentiment, no consistency in the comedy; the characters are as unsubstantial as ever, their sayings and doings governed even more obviously than in the previous acts by considerations of momentary effect, with no thought of what has gone before or of what is to come after. But still we have Miss Rehan Rehanising at high pressure, and still we are happy. And Mr. James Lewis is delightful in the one part that has any tincture of meaning in it; and Mrs. Gilbert is invincibly amiable in an unamiable and ungrateful character; and Miss Helma Nelson is pretty and agreeable as the "zweite Liebhaberin"; and Mr. Charles Richman is handsome and bouncing and eminently at home in the

part of the garrison Don Juan; and, in brief, Mr. Daly and Miss Rehan have plucked the flower safety from the nettle danger, and scored a success with the emptiest play on record.

Mr. Arthur Bouchier's performance of Young Wilding is a really clever piece of light comedy, its chief defect being a slight inaudibility in the rattling passages. *The Liar*,* which started its career, I imagine, in Spain, and came to Foote through Corneille, is one of the brightest of eighteenth-century farces, and genuinely amused the audience at the Royalty. Miss Irene Vanbrugh and Mr. Ernest Hendrie seconded Mr. Bouchier very cleverly.

XXVIII.

"MY GIRL."

22nd July.

I AM rather afraid that in producing *My Girl*† Mr. George Edwardes has inadvertently done an unkind turn to his neighbours, the Brothers Gatti. He has appropriated their special form of entertainment,

* Royalty, July 9 (afternoon). Repeated, with *Monsieur de Paris*, July 15 and 22 (afternoon).

† July 13—November 28. Transferred to Garrick Theatre, December 1—January 16, 1897.

and has added to it the attraction of music. When next we go to the Adelphi, we shall certainly miss, and possibly clamour for, the rhymes of Mr. Adrian Ross and the pleasantly familiar strains of Dr. Osmond Carr. For musical melodrama is vastly more entertaining than the unmelodious article, and no whit more preposterous. Indeed, on Beaumarchais's well-known principle, the Adelphi ought long ago to have been added to the list of "places where they sing." In the new Gaiety melodrama, however, the principle is reversed, and what is too silly to sing they speak. Mr. Adrian Ross's rhymes are much the cleverest part of the entertainment, and are really ingenious and lively—showing a great improvement on his *Biarritz* form. As for Mr. James T. Tanner, if to him belongs the invention of the Houndsditch Highlandman, he must be credited with a really humorous idea, carried out with singular and delightful ability by Mr. John Le Hay. Delightful is rather a strange word, perhaps, for what seems on the face of it a ferocious caricature. But, as a matter of fact, "Alexander McGregor" is never entirely unamiable. There is an engaging innocence in his vulgarity and rascality, and we are not surprised when, in the second act, he turns "sympathetic," though unfortunately he at once ceases to be funny. The truth is, Mr. Le Hay's admirable cleverness raises the lampoon into the

region of art. I never can understand why the Hebrew race should put up with the gross, brutal, and imbecile insults to which it is so often subjected on the stage. In the present production, Mr. "Leopold van Fontein" is a case in point—but not so "Alexander McGregor." Here there is genuine humour both in conception and execution; and humour saves everything. I, too, belong to an ancient race which is not exempt from caricature on the stage—indeed, there is a side-fling at the canny Scot in this very character. I vow that, for aught I care, our stage-humorists may make what fun they please of the kilt, and the haggis, and Glenlivat, and Athol brose, if only it is fun like this performance of Mr. John Le Hay's. He is a true comedian, and I owe him the heartiest laugh I have enjoyed in the Gaiety Theatre for many a—year.

For the rest, Mr. Tanner has successfully imitated, in his first act at any rate, all the characteristics of Adelphi melodrama. The scene, the Vicarage garden with the church in the background, takes us straight to Gattiland, and the Vicar and the Doctor sitting over their afternoon game of chess, bring the scent of Sims and Pettitt over the footlights before a word has been spoken. The characters, the manners, the ideals are throughout those of the Adelphi; it needs only a baritone villain to make the reproduction complete. Mr. Tanner probably thought that two

comic villains were enough, and the wicked baronet might be dispensed with. Of course we are treated to feeble reprobations of gambling in the abstract, coupled with fantastic illustrations of its advantages in the concrete. Of course the dear old Vicar's son is in a crack regiment, and is held up to our sympathy and admiration because he conscientiously "goes the pace" with his comrades, though he knows that it means ruin to his father. Of course he more than expiates his amiable weaknesses by going off to "pot niggers" in South Africa, and getting gloriously potted by the Boers instead. Just as in 1815 no popular drama would have been complete without its allusion to the Battle of Waterloo, so in 1896 our playwrights know that an allusion to the Battle of Krugersdorp is the very safest card they can play. Dryasdust historians may one day perceive a trifling difference between the two events, but in the meantime the great heart of the British public throbs to the one word as readily as to the other; and, for my part, I am far from despising the spirit which makes no distinction between success and failure, between wisdom and folly, so long as it appears that men have shown a stout heart and done the best that was in them. We must not complain, then, of the strong infusion of what M. Filon calls "*le grossier idéalisme des foules*" in *My Girl*; but the idealism "*des foules*" is one thing, the brutality of fools is another,

and there I draw the line. Not even at the Adelphi does one often see so offensive an action on the part of a would-be sympathetic character as the blow on the face given by the dashing hero, Lieutenant Mildreth, to the financier, Van Fontein. There may be some excuse for a physical attack upon a man caught in the act of gross cruelty, as in the leading case of *Nickleby v. Squeers*; or if, for instance, a drunken ruffian is persistently offensive to women who cannot escape from him—say, in a railway carriage—measures may legitimately be taken to abate the nuisance. But here the situation is totally different. Van Fontein's sole offence is that he has had the audacity to aspire to the hand of the gallant Lieutenant's sister. He has not even persevered in his suit after learning that it is distasteful to her, and there is no reason to suppose that he intends to do so. The bare mention of the fact that this vulgar person has proposed marriage to a relative of his High-Mightiness a lieutenant in the Guards is sufficient to make that warrior, without a word of warning, strike him a ringing blow on the cheek. The proceeding is as idiotic as it is brutal, and degrades Mr. Theo Mildreth to Van Fontein's own level—and lower. Yet it is deliberately proposed for our admiration, though I am happy to say it is not applauded. In the next act, on the other hand, when the Lieutenant's father, the Vicar, on somewhat similar provocation, threatens to "forget his cloth"

and thrash the financier, he cheaply earns a round of applause. There is no more popular character on the stage than a clergyman who "forgets his cloth,"—a fact which may perhaps point to a solution of the newspaper conundrum, "Why are the clergy not loved?"

Besides Mr. Le Hay, there are several "clever people" in *My Girl*. The sudden access of rowdiness apart, Mr. Paul Arthur makes an agreeable enough hero; Mr. W. H. Rawlins, as Van Fontein, shows a certain amount of humour; and Mr. W. Downes, a gentleman of colour, sings a Bogie-Man song effectively, carries himself gracefully, and delights us with a radiant, inexpressible grin. Miss Katie Seymour does some clever dancing; Miss Connie Ediss shows herself a real comedian; and Miss Ellaline Terriss is as simple and charming as ever. After all, why should not the Messrs. Gatti follow Mr. Edwardes' lead and engage Messrs. Ross and Carr to brighten up their next production? There would be no need for sweeping changes in their company. A very moderate vocal accomplishment suffices for this sort of work; and did not Mr. Terriss show us the other day, at the Wyndham Celebration, that he can warble with the best of them?

XXIX.

"LOVE ON CRUTCHES."

5th August.

MR. DALY'S latest production at the Comedy Theatre, entitled (Heaven knows why!) *Love on Crutches*,* is a typical specimen of the Daly repertory. It is in-offensive, agreeable, mildly amusing; but it does not compensate by remarkable ingenuity or irresistible comicality for its total lack of relation to real life or conceivable character. It falls—or, if it does not actually fall, it wobbles—between the two stools of comedy and farce. It exists for the sake of its intrigue, which is complex and improbable without being, at any point, particularly amusing. The initial idea is a clever variation of an old theme; but it is worked out with a sort of dry logic, which is a totally different thing from genuine comic invention. Character, meanwhile, and even the merest external verisimilitude of manners, are entirely elbowed out by the intrigue; so that the play is neither unbridled enough to pass muster as a farce, nor restrained enough to take rank as a comedy. It is not so audaciously formless as *The Countess Gucki*, but it is every bit as empty, and much less quaint. Yet, when all is said and done, it passes the evening quite

* July 28—August 8.

pleasantly, and one has a sense of ingratitude in picking it to pieces. For my part, indeed, I would willingly forgive it everything if it provided Miss Rehan with a first-rate part. But it doesn't. The character of Annie Austin is too commonplace and conventional to afford any real scope for the genius of this great comedian. She has only one of her very best moments in the whole play—the little passage of weeping in the second act. It is not a passage of genuine emotion; Miss Rehan is not really moved, and no more are we; the effect is one of pure comedy, obtained by delicate observation, original humour, and perfect executive skill. For the rest, Miss Rehan merely applies her exquisite mannerism to a part which, in all essentials, many other actresses could have played equally well. I was more than ever beset on the first night by a desire to analyse, or find an image to represent, the peculiar charm of Miss Rehan's voice. We speak loosely of a "harmonious" voice—I wonder whether Miss Rehan's does not literally deserve that epithet? In all that she says I seem to detect two or even more strains of sound, concurrent and complementary, forming in the exact sense of the word a harmony. One of these strains is thinly metallic, vibrant, almost sharp; the other (or others), soft, mellifluous, almost luscious. The image suggested to me is that of a silver zither-string muffled in deep-piled iridescent velvet. To many people this

may sound meaningless; indeed, all attempts to interpret one sense in terms of another assume an identity of perception and association on the part of writer and reader which very rarely exists as a matter of fact. Still, it gives me a certain satisfaction to have found a visual symbol for this haunting voice, and others may be interested if only in noting how their own sensations differ from mine. Mr. James Lewis and Mrs. Gilbert are excellent in very second-rate parts; Miss Sybil Carlisle is bright, graceful, and intelligent; and Mr. Charles Richman is agreeable enough as the misunderstood husband of the unappreciated wife, though he scarcely persuades us of the intellectual profundity of "Pascal's" novel.

XXX.

"THE MUMMY."

19th August.

How idle are the poets who talk of the "complaining millions of men," and represent our species as a saturnine, moody, careworn throng, for ever, in the words of Bre'r Rabbit, "loungin' around an' suff'rin'"! This is the sheerest perversion of the facts. Mankind, on the contrary, is gay, jovial, mercurial, ready to be carelessly and childishly happy on the smallest provocation. Even we islanders, fabled by our neigh-

hours to be splenetic, smileless, and apt to take our pleasures sadly, are in reality the easiest people in the world to move to laughter. We so dearly love to shake our sides that we will take no end of trouble, and endure the extreme of humiliation, in order to obtain the desired, the beneficent paroxysm. Messrs. George H. Day and Allan Reed have recognised this characteristic of our blithesome race, and speculated upon it in their farce *The Mummy*, produced last week at the Comedy Theatre;* and the event proved the justice of their insight. They put an unparalleled strain on our credulity, and flouted our common sense at every turn; they did it crudely, unblushingly, without ingenuity and without wit; their humour, if humour it can be called, was concerned with the most rudimentary topics, such as furnish forth the mock valentines that make the slums hideous in their season; yet far from resenting such insults to our intelligence, we took in perfect good part this gross tickling of our surface muscles, so to speak, and laughed obediently, heartily, and almost continuously. Mr. Gilbert, in *Pygmalion and Galatea*, postulated a miracle. Aphrodite endowed the sculptor's statue with life, reason, and speech; and though Mr. Gilbert did not take the trouble to define very exactly or consistently the mental state of the new-

* August 11—September 5. First performed at same theatre July 2 (afternoon).

born woman, but drew an exceedingly zigzag line between her knowledge and her ignorance, yet we were willing enough, for the nonce, to conceive an illogical miracle. Caprice, indeed, rather than logic, was to be expected of Aphrodite. The Messrs. Paulton, in *Niobe*, transferred the same theme into the modern world. It is true that instead of going frankly to the gods for their miracle they played pranks with an electric battery; but, having once brought their statue to life, they tried, like Mr. Gilbert, to get their effects out of her ignorance of the conditions of her new existence. Such subtleties are not for Messrs. Day and Reed. They have borrowed the Messrs. Paulton's battery, and applied it to a mummy; but their Rameses, on coming to life, is subject to no conditions whatever, and is simply a low comedian fantasticating at large. His talk is composed, in about equal proportions, of a semi-Biblical jargon and slang. On tasting a glass of whisky, three minutes after his resuscitation, he remarks with beatitude, "The world has progressed!" His favourite saying is, "Rameses was not born yesterday"—he employs it with complacency when the inevitable allusion is made to Potiphar's wife. He addresses the amorous old maid, without whom no such farce is complete, as a "giddy but ancient siren," and adds, "It is time thou wert embalmed." When he cannot understand something that is said

to him he remarks, "Thou talkest in riddles like the corner-man of the negro minstrels who used to perform at Thebes." He is an adept at the three-card trick and at thimble-rigging; he is familiar with the uses of the pawnshop; and he takes the first opportunity to get drunk upon "the whisky of the Scotch people." From the fact that all these traits occur in the first two acts, I leave the authors to draw whatever conclusion their acumen suggests. At the same time I again bear witness with emphasis to the fact that the audience was highly, and I believe genuinely, amused; while the farce, though scarcely a miracle of refinement, is not deliberately offensive, like some recent specimens of its class. It owes its success entirely to Mr. Lionel Brough, whose *Rameses* is a piece of really humorous and inventive buffoonery. Miss Elliott Page seemed embarrassed by the conventional Yankeeisms of a rather unpleasant part; but Miss Annie Goward, as a black servant, once more proved herself an excellent and original comedian.

XXXI.

"A BLIND MARRIAGE"—"MY ARTFUL VALET."

26th August.

MR. HERBERT STANDING has brought together a capital company at the Criterion, and has chosen an

exceedingly innocent and inoffensive play for his opening venture. To the overwrought playgoer, sick of the garish and epileptic gaieties of "musical farce," *A Blind Marriage** may be confidently recommended. He will find in it a gentle sedative, a quite harmless soothing-syrup—not "tinct with cinnamon" or with spice of any description. It will interest him sufficiently to keep him awake (if he is careful not to omit his coffee after dinner), but it will in no way excite him or get upon his nerves. He will not dream of it at night, and he will scarcely remember it next morning. In a word, it is the mildest of entertainments. Yet the anonymous author has got hold of a subject which, in other hands, might have yielded some thrilling melo-dramatic effects. It is a new variation (new to me, at least) upon the age-old theme of blindness. The classic dramatists, from Sophocles to Shakespeare, sought in blindness simply an effect of pathos or tragic horror. Until almost our own day, the recovery of sight was so infrequent a phenomenon that it did not enter into the playwright's calculations. On the spur of the moment, at any rate, I can think of no case in which it is employed as a dramatic motive before the first half of the present century, when Scribe used it in *Valérie*, and Herz in *King René's Daughter*. Of late years it has become quite a

* August 30—October 3.

common device; indeed, incurable blindness is comparatively rare in modern plays, and the stage has been the scene of many an operation that must greatly have astonished Mr. Critchett. In *A Blind Marriage* the author has imagined what I take to be a novel conjuncture. A blind husband, adoring and adored by his wife, recognises in her, with the first gleam of returning vision, a lady whom he believes to have been the mistress of one of his friends. "What!" you say, "is this the novelty? There is nothing so common as a husband's sudden enlightenment (real or supposed) on the subject of his wife's past; and the mere method of the revelation is a negligible detail." Pardon me; in this case it is not negligible. There might have been a very poignant dramatic effect (not of the highest, but still of a quite legitimate order) in the contrast between the longed-for bliss of recovered vision, and the misery into which it actually plunges the couple. The husband can imagine no higher happiness than to see his wife's face—and he sees it only to loathe it. The wife yearns unspeakably to be beautiful in her husband's eyes—and when his eyes are opened she reads in them nothing but horror. We have here an external and improbable, but not inconceivable, instance of that irony of fate which has been, from of old, one of the mainsprings of drama. In your ordinary melodrama, the husband picks up a compromising letter,

or overhears the villain trying to blackmail his wife, or is simply told, by some friend or enemy, that the lady was not all she seemed. The peripety, the change of fortune, is a quite simple one—it is a mere drop from one level to another. But in *A Blind Marriage* we have first a spring to the very heights of happiness, followed by, or rather resulting in, a plunge into the very depths of woe. The peripety is a peculiarly complex and violent one, and might have been extremely moving. To an altogether different order of art, of course, belongs such a revelation-scene as that in Mr. Hardy's *Tess*, where will and character, instead of mere external incident, are the motive forces. The peripety is not so great, though Mr. Hardy has ingeniously intensified it; but, in any case, it is not that we care about—it is the typical truth of the situation, and the delicate skill with which it is developed. I drag in *Tess*, rather incongruously perhaps, lest I should seem to forget the world-wide difference between a psychological and a mechanical situation. In the one we are interested in the action and reaction of individual will upon will and feeling upon feeling; in the other we have merely to sympathise (if we can) with the emotions begotten in abstract, unindividualised characters by more or less extraordinary outward circumstances. In pictures of modern life, at any rate, there can be no doubt which is the higher form of art; but in

preferring the higher form we need not despise or reject the lower.

In all this I have considered the inherent possibilities of the situation, rather than what the author of *A Blind Marriage* has made of it. As a matter of fact, he has made nothing at all. He lets it slip through his fingers and ineffectually dribble away. He is quite innocent of the art of preparing and developing a situation. At one point he seems for a moment to be working towards a subsidiary situation of considerable power; but he almost immediately sheers off again, and nothing comes of it. The operation which has restored Lord Langdale's sight has been elaborately kept secret, so that those around him think he is still blind, when in reality he can see perfectly. If, then, the villain, presuming on Langdale's blindness, were to do something which should unmask himself and disprove his slanders upon Lady Langdale, the conjuncture would be undeniably effective. But nothing of the sort happens. His lordship simply remarks that he can see, at a moment when it doesn't particularly matter whether he can or not; and the villain has to be foiled by the clumsy and unexpected production of an old letter. The author, in brief, handles his material in a perfectly helpless fashion. He can scarcely be said to miss his effects, since it is doubtful whether he ever aims at or even sees them. The characters habitually expound

their motives and intentions in soliloquies; the comic relief, preposterous in itself, has no semblance of connection with the main plot; there is scarcely a technical enormity or puerility that the author does not commit with the blindest unconsciousness. Yet, as aforesaid, there is a certain amiability about the play, and the theme, as distinguished from its treatment, is interesting enough.

The Americans who accuse us of habitually slighting, if not insulting, their country, ought to find some comfort in the fact that the good genie of the stage, the man of inexhaustible gaiety, courage, and resource, who checkmates the villain and marries the comic heroine, is almost invariably an American. Jefferson D. Herd in this play is a good genie indeed, who adds to the statutory qualifications for the part a miraculous (though strictly amateur) proficiency in eye-surgery. It is evidently the fascination of this character, which he acts with a good deal of humour and finish, that has led Mr. Standing to produce *A Blind Marriage*. Mr. Waring and Miss Kate Rorke play Lord and Lady Langdale with all desirable skill. It is curious to remark how the emptiness of their characterless characters forces these artists to fall back upon conventional tricks and stagey methods. Who, indeed, could treat otherwise than conventionally such dialogue as this, between the heroine and the villain who has insulted her—

Heroine: "Stop! You coward! How dare you! Go!"

Villain: "It is peace or war, remember!"

Heroine: "With such as you I make no treaty! Do your worst!"

Mr. Esmond and Mr. Arnold Lucy are marvellously made up as the indistinguishable and inconceivable twins who supply the comic relief, and Miss Eva Moore, as the object of their undivided affections, plays with a great deal of pleasant vivacity.

At Terry's Theatre, Mr. James Welch has revived, under the title of *My Artful Valet*,* Mr. James Mortimer's adaptation of *Le Truc d'Arthur*, formerly known as *Gloriana*. I do not quite see the reason for the change of title; but, by whatever name it is called, the farce is amusing, and there is no reason why its great success in America should not be renewed on this side. It is acted with excellent spirit. Mr. Welch is exceedingly funny as the ingenious Spinks, though it is too much of a mere low-comedy part to bring out anything like the full range of his talent. His very genuine gift as a character-actor may be seen rather in Mr. Louis Parker's *Man in the Street*, which precedes *My Artful Valet*. The fun of Spinks, especially in the last act, consists very largely in wild rushes of comic consternation, which Mr. Welch executes with great

* August 22—October 3.

agility and dexterity, but which scarcely rank among the highest of histrionic achievements. In the part of the fiery Russian Count who prides himself on always being "perfectly calm and correct," Mr. Ivan Watson contributes scarcely less than Mr. Welch to the success of the production. His performance is a finished piece of acting. Miss Lydia Cowell is capital as the maid-servant, Kitty, and Mr. J. G. Grahame, Mr. Alfred Maltby, and Miss Edith Blande are all as good as need be.

XXXII.

THE MOUNTING OF THE "RING."

Westminster Gazette, 28th August.

As scenic apparatus, according to Wagner, is to be an essential and scarcely a subordinate element in the Art Work of the Future, a few notes on the mounting of this year's Festspiel at Bayreuth may still be in season, the more so as I understand that *Der Ring des Nibelungen* is to be repeated next year. As the cycle I saw was the sixth and last, it is fair to assume that the scenery was in perfect working order, and represented the best that Bayreuth can do in the way of pictorial illusion. The best, let me say at once, is very remarkable. In several important details the utmost imaginable perfection is attained; and such

imperfections as one has to note are by no means peculiar to Bayreuth. There is no doubt that the production, taken as a whole, touches the highest level as yet recorded in scenic art. But records are made to be broken, and that no one knew better than Richard Wagner. He boasted, quite justly, of having received as his cradle-gift "the ne'er contented soul that strives for ever towards the New." If it is to remain faithful to the spirit of its founder, the "Festive Music-Hall"—so the local guide-book renders "Festspielhaus"—must break away from the mere letter of his achievement in those material arts in which it is clear that he could never entirely realise his ideal. In approximating more and more closely to that ideal, Bayreuth will simply continue his work and fulfil its mission. A perfect performance, musically and dramatically, can be attained, if at all, only by a happy chance—such a concourse of circumstances, that is to say, as the most far-seeing management can scarcely control. Perfect scenic illusion, on the other hand, is an ideal which may and ought to be steadily approached. The scene-painter and machinist are magicians who may always be exhorted to "tak' thocht an' mend."

The first scene of the tetralogy is in some ways the most marvellous. I do not see how the gambols of the Rhine-Maidens could possibly be bettered. They are perfectly graceful, and seem perfectly unrestrained.

The mechanism by which they are produced—totally invisible from a seat well forward in the auditorium—must be a triumph of ingenuity. One could better conceive it if each of the nixies were confined, so to speak, to a separate plane or circle; but there is no appearance of any such restriction. Their courses interlace and interweave to any extent; they seem free as fishes in a rocky pool. They dive to the depths, they shoot to the surface, they sail athwart and around each other with an air of unpremeditated caprice, which must of course conceal the utmost nicety of preadjustment. I failed even to detect any sameness in their gambols—any notable repetition of one manœuvre. Something depends, of course, upon the grace of the individual performers. One of the Rhine-Maidens—the tallest—waved her arms and swayed her body much more beautifully than the other two. But who has ever seen three sisters, terrene or aquatic, absolutely equal in grace? One thing alone tended to impair the illusion—their skirts were rather too evidently tied in about the ankles. It would, of course, be impossibly ungraceful for them to move their legs like the ordinary human swimmer; but there should be no appearance of constriction. In this scene, in short, the poetry of motion materially helped out the poetry of word and tone. On the other hand, when the Rhine-Maidens reappear in the *Götterdämmerung* on the surface of the river, there is -

scarcely an attempt at illusion. They are patently standing behind a sheet of gauze, and indulging in purposeless calisthenics. Here is a problem for ingenuity to grapple with.

The actual painting of the depths of the Rhine is quite indifferent. The Germans seem to be rather behind us than ahead of us in the use of modelled scenery as opposed to the good old profile "wings," which must soon be abolished, one would think, even in scenes of rock and woodland. A light material in which to model large expanses of rock and similar surfaces is surely one of the great desiderata of the scenic artist. Professor Herkomer has shown how, and with what effect, a whole scene can be sculptured rather than painted, from the cobble-stones of the village street to the sheaves on the distant corn-fields. What is possible at Bushey may be impracticable at Bayreuth, where such enormous changes must be made so rapidly; but something ought certainly to be attempted in the direction of greater solidity. Hunding's house in *Die Walküre* was as unillusive as a child's card-board model. The ash-tree growing through the roof was rudely painted in profile, and, to judge by its shabbiness, might indeed have been centuries old. There may be some doubt as to the artistic propriety of modelling a trunk which has to be crowned with foliage; but since in this case the foliage is cut off by the roof, there is not the slightest

excuse for leaving the trunk and branches flatly undeceptive. It is of the greatest importance that the stem should seem solid, since the sword Nothung has to be drawn from it. Similarly, nothing could be more pitiful than the three parallel profile rocks among which the Valkyries have to skip about at the beginning of the third act. These belong to the infancy of scene-painting. On the other hand, Mime's cavern in the first act of *Siegfried* is admirably designed and most convincingly built up. In this scene, a much more difficult task than the interior of Hunding's house was much more successfully carried out.

In the matter of design, the Bayreuth scene-painting shows, as a whole, an appropriately Teutonic cast of imagination—heavy and magnificent rather than vivacious or audacious. There is an undeniable sense of vastness in the Walhall scene, though why the castle "east of the sun and west of the moon" should be totally devoid of windows is a question not easily answered. The theory that Wotan so willed it in order to prevent Fricka from keeping an eye on his movements is perhaps more ingenious than conclusive. But it is in its meteorology that Bayreuth undoubtedly excels everything as yet attempted in England or France. Mists rolling down a ravine, or storm-wrack drifting over a livid sky—such phenomena as these are here reproduced with amazing perfection. The

graduation of light, too, is as a rule most admirably managed. The sunrise over the Rhine in the second act of the *Götterdämmerung* is by far the most beautiful thing of the kind I have ever seen on the stage. The pleasure it gives one is quite comparable to that with which one watches a similar spectacle in nature. Forked lightning, moreover, is excellently rendered, but sheet lightning among the clouds ought to be entirely abolished, as it simply converts them for a moment from clouds into breadths of gauze. On the whole, then, the Bayreuth Clerk of the Weather must be regarded as an invaluable official. What gauze and electricity can do in the way of illusion, he does without fail. As a cloud-compeller he is unsurpassed. But when we come to the fire scenes, and especially to the wall of fire conjured up by Wotan round Brünnhilde's rock, there is a different tale to tell. It was in an evil hour for scenic art that Wagner came across that deplorable system of steam-jets to which he pinned his faith. I have never—no, never—in Bayreuth or anywhere else, seen anything like a tolerable effect produced by their aid. The slightest draught on the stage disorganises them, and obscures their intention; and even when they act as they are designed to act, the effect produced is neither plausible nor beautiful. They are never in the least like fire, but advertise themselves—to the nose no less than the eyes—simply as what they are, to wit, jets of vapour with a red light

upon them. The effect at the close of *Die Walküre* is absolutely childish. An Elizabethan placard would conjure up a wall of fire in our imagination far better than these fizzing squibs and ragged clouds of steam. In this case Loge has betrayed Wagner no less than Wotan. Strangely enough, Wagner seems to have had a positive affection for this delusive, rather than illusive, device. He resorts to it on every possible occasion. For instance, when Alberich first puts on the Tarnhelm he is transformed into a "Nebelsäule"—in other words, two jets of steam shoot up in front of him and give him time to slip behind a rock. The trick would not deceive a baby; as an illusion, it is simply contemptible. In a case like this, there would surely be no irreverence in calling in the resources of modern magic to supplement the clumsy thaumaturgy of the Master. When the steam is turned on near the front of the stage, as it frequently is, it drifts out into the auditorium, and reminds one of a laundry on washing-day. And, unfortunately, these dismal emanations of Nibelheim may be said to permeate the whole "Ring."

Some of the other illusions are equally puerile—notably the figures of the Valkyries riding through the clouds. The Bayreuth machinist might do worse than take counsel in this matter with the designer of the *Ombres Chinoises* at the Chat Noir. Again, the control of the costumes ought to be placed in the

hands of an imaginative artist instead of being left, as I understand it is, to tradition, tempered by the chance inspirations of Wahnfried. Gunther's clan in the *Götterdämmerung* are admirably attired, and the uniform of the Valkyries is effective when it chances upon a moderately Valkyrie-like figure; but anything more ludicrous than the costumes of the gods in the *Rheingold* it would be hard to conceive. This happy family is as incongruously tricked out as the guests at a fancy ball. Fricka wears a conventional Lady Macbeth robe; Freia sports a Botticelli gown upon a most un-Botticellian figure; Froh suggests one of Tenniel's drawings of Mr. Punch as Apollo; and Donner looks for all the world like an ill-drawn and rather puny Giant Blunderbore out of a child's story-book. One could weep to see the mighty Asa-Thor thus pitifully travestied. All this—with other details too numerous to mention—a little thought and taste might easily rectify. If the whole of the mounting came up to the level of its best scenes and effects, the Festspiel would be as great a delight to the eye as to the ear. And, by-the-by, if I were the machinist, I would create a dragon that should give Siegfried a better fight for his money, or I would perish in the attempt!

XXXIII.

"BOYS TOGETHER"—"MONTE CARLO."

2nd September.

So strange are the ramifications of cause and effect in this Chinese-puzzle of a world, that a series of circumstances which can be traced back to the wreck of the *Jeannette* off the New Siberia Islands in 1881, and the consequent drifting of a pair of oil-skin breeches across the Arctic Ocean to the coast of Greenland, prevented my seeing the first act and three-quarters of *Boys Together* at the Adelphi on Wednesday last.* The links of the chain I shall spare you; I merely mention the fact by way of deprecating the wrath of Messrs. Haddon Chambers and Comyns Carr, who must at once see that, as I had not the slightest control over those oil-skin breeches, I cannot be held responsible for acts or omissions arising directly and inevitably out of their peregrinations. Nevertheless, I fully intended to cancel, so far as I could, the effects of the trans-polar current, by paying a second and more punctual visit to the theatre. For my failure to do so, I cannot arraign either the current or the oil-skins; it is due simply and solely to the play itself. I felt I had supped full enough of horrors for one week—I had

* August 26—December 5.

no appetite for a second helping. The act and three-quarters which I did not see could not possibly have mitigated (though it is true they could scarcely have intensified) the unpleasant effect of the two acts and a quarter which I did see. When I entered the theatre, Mr. Terriss had just been crucified somewhere in the Libyan desert. There he hung by the wrists, in extreme physical agony, for ten minutes or so, before he was ultimately cut down; and the imitation of torture is just the sort of effect which comes well within the range of an actor like Mr. Terriss—he writhed and squirmed and moaned and groaned with a right good will. However, I do not pretend to that alacrity of imagination which makes stage torments real and intolerable to Monsieur Jules Lemaitre and Mr. Walkley. I hardened my heart, and endured the crucifixion of Mr. Terriss with tolerable fortitude. But when, in the next act, Mr. Terriss stuck a knife through Mr. Abingdon's hand, pinning it to the table, in order to torture him into signing with his other hand a confession of his villainies, I would willingly have paid ten-and-sixpence on the spot for the right to relieve my feelings by hissing. A more inhuman and sickening incident (Mr. Terriss, mind you, is the hero!) I never saw on the stage. It caused me a physical shudder which recurs as I write. At the same time, it afforded a good instance of the superiority of sug-

gestion to direct presentation. Of course Mr. Terriss did not really transfix Mr. Abingdon's hand, and scarcely any attempt was made to deceive the eye. The whole transaction passed in a very dim light, so that it was impossible to see with any distinctness what was going on. All we knew was that Mr. Terriss expressed the abominable intention, that a dagger flashed rapidly in the air, and that Mr. Abingdon, who had for long been cowering with terror, gave a yell, and a few additional wriggles, and hastily signed the paper. There was really nothing to offend the eye in the matter; we took the will for the deed; it was the brutality of the idea that we resented. I ought not, however, to say "we"—to all appearance, I was alone in my disgust. The house rocked with applause, and, although the last act was yet to come, there were loud calls for the dramatists who had conceived this superb and thrilling scene. It, and indeed the whole play, justly entitles them to rank as the Rider Haggards of the stage.

Crude physical sensation, sheer hammer-and-tongs, Fat-Boyish blood-curdling, has been their sole aim and endeavour. The precipice-scene in the last act is elaborated, not without a certain mechanical ingenuity, so as to wring the last drop of nervous excitement out of it. First, hero and villain roll over into the abyss, locked in a deadly embrace. Then

the hero is found to be clinging by his eyebrows—in literal fact, by one hand—to the verge. With incredible exertions, the heroine manages to get him hoisted up, and they both throw a rope to the villain who is caught in some trees. Yo, heave ho! they haul him up and up, hand over hand, till his grey and ghastly countenance appears over the edge of the precipice; when, behold! the very earth crumbles away beneath his weight, the rope breaks, and we hear the thud of his fall hundreds of feet below. Of all this I do not complain; it is legitimate, nerve-twitching melodrama, skilfully elaborated both by the authors and the scene-painter (Mr. W. Perkins). Nay more, the whole play, with all its crass effect-hunting, is not quite so empty and lifeless as the old Pettitt-Sims style of piece. All I would venture to submit to the authors is that they ought, in their own interests, to be a little more economical of their horrors. They cannot go on for ever piling them up in this fashion. I foresee a danger of anti-climax in their next play, or their next again. It appears, by the way, that, in the Soudan scene, Mr. Terriss was flogged before being crucified—"scourged" is his own more delicate way of putting it. Whether this takes place on the open stage "I may not know, I cannot tell," not having been there (alas!) to see. If it does, I really cannot think of anything that is left, in the way of physical brutality, for another

play. If, however, the scourging takes place behind the scenes, it is still open to the authors, in their next work, to string a man up to the gratings and administer four or five dozen lashes of the cat-o'-nine-tails in sight of the public. To judge by the way in which the hand-jabbing scene was applauded, this is just the sort of thing the Adelphi audience would like.

We have got very, very far away from the time when the Censor used to earn his salary mainly by going through the manuscripts sent him and substituting "Heaven" wherever his eye caught the word "God" or even "Lord." Mr. Terriss, as the Stony-Hearted Avenger, has "God" for ever in his mouth, and even announces at one point that "There is no God!" Of course he is presently brought round, by the pious heroine, to better sentiments: I mention the matter merely to suggest a little more moderation in the employment of the monosyllable. The comic relief, too, was a trifle startling. I could scarcely believe my ears when one of the comedians came out with an exceedingly broad turn of phrase, which, however, I took to be a barefaced and audacious gag. But it proved to be nothing of the sort. The whole humour of the last act turned upon this phrase. Not being in the habit of taking ladies to the Adelphi, I have no particular objection. After all, there is nothing immoral, nothing inhuman in this

sort of street-corner humour. I simply record the facts as another symptom of the marked decline in that national habit, or hypocrisy, of verbal decency with which our more outspoken neighbours beyond the Channel are apt to reproach us. Mr. Terriss, Miss Millward, and Mr. Abingdon play the hero, heroine, and villain with excellent vigour and conviction; Mr. Mackintosh is good as a subordinate villain; and the comic element is represented by Mr. Harry Nicholls, Mr. C. W. Somerset, and Mr. J. D. Beveridge.

It is pleasant, for once in a way, to come across a musical farce which one can praise with some cordiality. The first act of *Monte Carlo* at the Avenue Theatre* is really very clever, and the second act, though it falls off a good deal, is also amusing. Of course if you want delicate humour and philosophic wit, you will not go to musical farce for it; but in *Monte Carlo* there is none of the elaborate and frigid nastiness which some librettists seem to think essential to success. The merit of the production lies, not, certainly, in its story, which is trivial and spasmodic to a degree, but in the ingenuity of its versification, the gaiety of its music, and the remarkable cleverness of nearly all the performers, some well known, others (to me) quite unknown. Mr. Harry Greenbank has this time surpassed, not

* August 27—November 6.

only himself, but all his competitors, in the facility and finish of his rhyming. Mr. Gilbert I consider as out of the competition; he is the master in this style of work, and several of Mr. Greenbank's brightest refrains are obviously inspired by him, just as, in Mr. Howard Talbot's music, there are numberless reminiscences of Sir Arthur Sullivan. But more than one of Mr. Greenbank's lyrics Mr. Gilbert might sign without a blush, and not one of them falls below a fair standard of form. I do not attempt to quote from them, for fragments of comic rhyming, reproduced in cold blood, are apt to seem trumpery enough; but I may refer any one who thinks my praise exaggerated to four numbers following close upon each other in the libretto—"The Sisters Gelatine," "I'm Jemima," "A Tale of a Restarong," and "The Dancing Dean." If these are not models of light verse for music, I know nothing of the matter. But the true strength of *Monte Carlo* lies in the performers, and in the general sense of gaiety and go which they succeed in imparting to the piece. Mr. Eric Lewis, Miss Lottie Venne, and Miss Emmie Owen are old hands at this class of work, while Mr. E. W. Garden, Mr. Charles Rock, and Mr. Robb Harwood are new recruits to it. All are capital in their various ways, and show themselves genuine comedians. The surprise of the evening, however, was the excellence of the music-hall element with

which the performance was seasoned. I presume that Miss May and Miss Venie Belfry and Miss Lalor Shiel are, what they purport to be, music-hall "artistes"; I can only say that if there were many like them, I should be a more assiduous student of the variety stage. The Misses Belfry, indeed, are only unusually bright and attractive specimens of the genus "song-and-dance artiste"; but Miss Lalor Shiel is much more than that—she is an original and exceedingly quaint comedian. Her diction was sometimes not so clear as it ought to be, but otherwise her performance was an accomplished piece of fantastic character-acting. The mounting was good, and the stage-management particularly clever. Again and again the fun was kept going by some ingenious little scenic manoeuvre, beyond the reach of the mere mechanical drill-sergeant. Take it all in all, *Monte Carlo* is, to my thinking, the brightest and least offensive musical farce we have yet seen.

XXXIV.

"LORD TOM NODDY"—"THE LITTLE GENIUS"—
"THE DUCHESS OF COOLGARDIE."

September 23rd.

MANY quaint opinions are from time to time attributed to me by people who find it easier to evolve

my criticisms out of their inner consciousness than to read the articles I actually write. So far from blaming them, I entirely reciprocate the feeling—I would much rather invent their opinions than read their articles. For instance, I am accused of being a determined enemy of musical farce; whereas my criticisms are there to prove that from the very birth of this now rampant art-form I have been, not its enemy, but its candid friend. It earned my sympathy at the outset by killing that egregious monstrosity, the "three-act burlesque drama" of the 'eighties. Then, it brought to the front two admirable comic rhymers, Mr. Adrian Ross and Mr. Harry Greenbank; and though I may sometimes have been moved to regret that their gifts of expression should be unaccompanied by invention, thought, or taste, yet I have never failed to dwell on the immense technical superiority of their work to that which passed current among the previous generation of librettists. I have marvelled that men of such literary faculty should be content to remain, what they practically are, hack writers at the beck and call of speculators in vulgarity; but my very wonder has arisen from a lively sense of their extraordinary talent. Furthermore, I have never been slow to express my appreciation of the genuine ability which is now and then displayed by the comedians engaged in this class of production—such as (to name current examples) Mr. John Le Hay at

the Gaiety and Miss Lalor Shiel at the Avenue. In short, I have always made the best of musical farce, and have declared, and do hereby declare, that it is a form capable of better things.

In their own interests, then, let me warn the aforesaid speculators in vulgarity to beware of over-speculation. There is, doubtless, an extraordinary appetite or craze for the ignoble at present abroad in the world; but a few such productions as *Lord Tom Noddy** (at the Garrick, of all theatres!) will presently glut the taste. It is indeed an amazing spectacle to be presented on one of the leading stages of a civilised country. To be quite just, it contains none of the deliberate indecency to which some authors devote the best part of their invention; nor is it, in point of story, much more inept than the general run of its class. But words fail me to describe the sordid, squalid spirit that animates its garish body, or to depict the incoherent world of foolish knaves and knavish fools to which it introduces us. If there were any sense or meaning in the production, we should have to reckon the librettist, Mr. George Dance, one of the most ferocious cynics that ever lived, a misanthrope in comparison with whom Swift was tolerant and Chamfort genial. In reality, of course, he is nothing of the kind—he is only a writer without an atom of comic invention, intent on making

* September 15—November 14.

a thoughtless crowd fancy itself amused. As a versifier he is laborious and stolid, without a trace of the sparkling ingenuity which distinguishes the rhyming of Mr. Ross and Mr. Greenbank. Here, at any rate, one is untroubled by any sense of wasted ability. The story is one of frenetic fortune-hunting, every one being fiercely set on marrying whoever shall prove to be entitled to a sum of £100,000, which shifts about from owner to owner in the most fantastic and meaningless way. And this exhilarating legend is actually woven around the personality of a performer known as "Little Tich," a Quasimodo of the music-halls, whose "talent" lies in a grotesque combination of agility with deformity. The appearance of such a personage on the stage places criticism in a painful dilemma. It seems inhuman to dwell on, or even allude to, his physical misfortune; while to ignore it is in fact to betray the cause—not of art, which has nothing to do in the matter—but of ordinary good feeling and humanity. I have seen "Little Tich" before, in the distance, so to speak, at Drury Lane. The grotesque surroundings of pantomime seemed his natural habitat; he appeared to enjoy his antics, and one accepted him as a gnome in the fairy world. But to see him at close quarters in a small theatre, figuring as a real human being, and the hero, forsooth, of what purports to be a love-story! To see him dandled like a child in the arms

of a woman who wants to marry him (of course for his money)! I can only say that I would rather be "Little Tich" himself than the man or woman who can find pleasure in such a spectacle. He, poor fellow, cannot help his diminutiveness, his crookedness, his superfluity of fingers; and if he can make money by exhibiting these things, who shall blame him for doing so? The true hideousness is that of the society which pays to see and laugh at such spectacles, instead of paying liberally to have them kept out of sight. This morning I opened at random a volume of Gautier's criticisms, and came upon the following sentence: "Il y a quelque chose de féroce et d'immoral dans ce rire excité par la difformité et la bêtise; mais, dans une époque comme la nôtre, on rit comme on peut et non pas comme on veut." And the "difformité," be it noted, of which Gautier wrote, was not deformity in our sense of the word, but merely the extreme ugliness of the actor Odry. He was wrong, however, if he thought the "ferocity" of laughing at such spectacles peculiar to "such epochs as ours." It is a survival of barbarism; it comes out strongly in the savage and the child; it proves, not that our civilisation is corrupt, but that it is only skin-deep.

Apart from "Little Tich," the attractions of *Lord Tom Noddy* are the perpetual smile of Miss Mabel Love, the cleverly audacious vulgarity of Miss Kate

James, and the insistent rhythms of Dr. Osmond Carr's music. As a non-musical man, I delight in the strains of Dr. Osmond Carr. The great charm of a melody, to the non-musical, is that it shall slide at once into a pre-existent groove, or rather mould, in the mind, and that its development shall fulfil the expectations awakened by its opening bars. This Dr. Carr's melodies never fail to do. They all exist beforehand in my mind—relics and evidences, no doubt, of some previous state of existence. They are "Intimations of Immortality," which, as Wordsworth aptly put it, "have had elsewhere their setting, and come (more or less) from afar." Therefore I rejoice in them.

The original form of *The Little Genius*,* at the Shaftesbury, found scant favour, if I remember rightly, in the eyes of my colleague, "R. S. H." In its present condition very little, I fancy, of its original form survives. The dialogue, at any rate, is obviously a mere agglomeration of gags, many of them topical and of quite recent date. I wish I could think that its second state was better than its first, and add a rider to "R. S. H.'s" verdict; but unfortunately my imagination shrinks from conceiving what its first state must have been if it was worse than its present form. I can scarcely remember a production on such an elaborate scale

* July 9—November 21.

that seemed to me so singularly and ingeniously devoid of merit. It kept one tossing, as it were, in a fever of ennui: during the spoken dialogue one yearned unspeakably for the next song, and when the song began, one's only wish was that the singers would make haste and get back to prose again. What I specially went to see was the so-called "Moulin Rouge Quadrille" performed—I cannot say danced—by four large Frenchwomen, who, to do them justice, seemed heartily to despise their business and those who applauded it. Nevertheless the quadrille is worth seeing, if only as an extreme instance of what people can be got to tolerate, and even admire, if you assure them loudly enough that it is their duty so to do. The solemn silliness of the spectacle baffles description. It has neither beauty, nor ingenuity, nor devilry, nor audacity to commend it; it is pretentiously ugly and funereally inane. I presume that, in Paris, it must have possessed the attraction of indecency; here even that is absent.

Mr. John Coleman has opened his campaign at Drury Lane in a spirited fashion. *The Duchess of Coolgardie** is stated on the playbill to be the work of "Euston Leigh and Cyril Clare"; but from the non-appearance of these gentlemen at the close, and from the naughty little twinkle in Mr. Coleman's

* September 19—November 26.

eye when he came before the curtain in their stead, I am inclined to imagine that he himself is one or both of them. The play, in any case, is a very fair specimen of its class. It is full of bustle and movement; its sentiment is not blatant, nor is its humour malodorous. It is an incredible refinement of self-torturing reticence which keeps the hero and heroine apart through the five long acts; but to consider so is to consider too seriously. Though the mounting does not pretend to the spectacular lavishness to which the late Sir Augustus Harris accustomed us, it is careful, picturesque, and in short all that can reasonably be desired. For my part, I found the production much less tedious than some of its recent predecessors. The actors who chiefly distinguished themselves were Mr. E. H. Vanderfeldt, who made an original and picturesque villain; Mr. J. L. Shine, whose comic Irishman was really amusing; and Miss Hilda Spong, a new arrival from Australia, who showed grace and feeling in the part of the heroine. Mr. Hermann Vezin played a minor part effectively, and Miss Laura Johnson impersonated a black-boy, with grace and spirit, indeed, but with a reckless expenditure of lung power. Other parts were well filled by Mr. Charles Glenney, Mr. C. M. Lowne, Mr. Walter Bertram, junior, Mr. Laurence Cautley, and Miss Laura Linden.

XXXV.

"CYMBELINE."

30th September.

PRECISELY because it is not one of Shakespeare's theatrical masterpieces—not a play of impetuous action and intense dramatic effect—*Cymbeline** is eminently suited for revival at the Lyceum. The characters of Iachimo and Imogen come well within the range of Sir Henry Irving and Miss Ellen Terry; the text is not so closely-knit or so thoroughly vitalised as to bleed at the touch of the adaptor's shears; and the vague time and varied place of the action offer ample scope to the imagination of the costumer and scene-painter. Therefore I felt confident in advance of the artistic success of the revival. If its popular success should be less striking, the fault will be Shakespeare's, not Sir Henry Irving's.

For this fascinating poem, this incomparable "portrait of a lady," is anything but a good play. It is constructed in plain defiance, not merely of any and every set of canons, but of rudimentary common-sense. The mood in which Shakespeare

* September 22—December 11. Afternoon performances, December 12 and 16. Reproduced January 23—29, 1897, with Mr. Cooper Cliffe as Iachimo.

wrote it is a profound mystery to me. Sir Walter Scott avers that he dictated the greater part of *The Bride of Lammermoor* when he was in such pain that he had no recollection afterwards of what he had done, and read it as though it had been the work of another. One cannot but wonder whether *Cymbeline* may not have been the outcome of some such morbid condition, heightening, if possible, the nimbleness of the cerebral processes, but blunting the sense of normal relations, and relaxing the vigilance of self-criticism. Not long ago a playwright wrote to me : "As soon as I sat down to work, my temperature went up to a hundred and two. I got on like a house on fire : but when the fever left me, and I read what I had written, I had invariably to tear it all up." I wish some one had slipped a thermometer under Shakespeare's tongue when he was devising the intrigue of *Cymbeline*, and piecing together that amazing final scene, which may be described as a triumph of stagecraft turned topsy-turvy. The mercury, I cannot help fancying, would have slid up alarmingly ; and we know on the authority of Heminge and Condell (indirectly corroborated by Ben Jonson) that if Shakespeare did chance to write when his pulse was running too high, he did not, like my friend, re-read and cancel afterwards.

Really, as I think of it, this fever theory seems quite as plausible as a good many other Shake-

spearian discoveries. It would account, among other things, for the excessively elliptic style of the play, which some modern writers have imitated in cold blood, with disastrous effect. But this compression was a general tendency of his later manner, though it is here carried to an unusual height. The characteristics peculiar to *Cymbeline* are an ingenuity which may fairly be called morbid and an extreme and all-pervading uncertainty of taste. As a rule so sparing of his invention, Shakespeare is in this case lavish to the point of recklessness. His main story, it is true, he took ready-made from Boccaccio or another, and its pseudo-historical setting from Holinshed; but instead of seeking in any way to soften its psychological crudities, he serves them up raw, so to speak, and devotes his whole thought and care to a number of subsidiary complications, frigid and incredible, all tending to make confusion worse confounded in the grand transformation-scene at the close. In no other case, that I can remember, does he so elaborately prepare his effects as in the case of the sleeping-potion and the change of clothes; and in no other case, certainly, are the effects attained so disproportionate to the care expended upon them. He lays these two converging trains from afar, with all the self-conscious cleverness of Scribe or Sardou; and instead of kindling some splendid flame of dramatic effect, they at last coalesce only to flicker

and go out. True, we owe to the sleeping-potion the lovely dirge over Fidele (fancy trying to deprive Shakespeare of this gem, merely because, like almost all his lyrics, it has one or two flaws in its lustre!); but even the dirge is scarcely an adequate set-off, dramatically speaking, against the absurdity of the Queen's conduct in expending upon Pisanio, without even ensuring that he shall ever taste it, the whole of the drug which she has with difficulty wrung from the reluctant physician. As for Cloten's putting on the dress of Posthumus, and all that results therefrom, was there ever so far-fetched a device for the attainment of so paltry an end? It leads only to a grotesque situation, a strained and stilted soliloquy for Imogen, and a little extra bewilderment in the last scene. Furthermore, in order to secure this dismal effect, Pisanio is made to act with inconceivable stupidity in putting the malignant Cloten on Imogen's track. In the whole of this complex intrigue, in short, there is scarcely an incident that will bear a moment's examination; and it is all devised to lead up to a scene of recognitions which have no element of surprise in them, narratives of what we have seen in action, and explanations of things that have already been explained two or three times over. May not this fairly be called morbid ingenuity? Mr. Barrett Wendell, a thoughtful American commentator, suggests that in writing

Timon and *Pericles* Shakespeare felt a sort of lethargy creeping over him, and that *Cymbeline* is the "tremendous effort" of "an artist who, in spite of declining power, was determined to assert that he could still do better than ever." For my part, I do not find "declining power" in *Cymbeline*, any more than in its successors, *The Tempest* and *The Winter's Tale*. What I find is power, in itself unimpaired, which has, for the moment, eluded the control of the regulative intelligence.

That department of the regulative intelligence which we call taste seems to have been specially inert. The poet was so busy spinning a futile intrigue for the later acts, that he quite overlooked the psychological crudities of the Boccaccian fable from which he set forth. Nay, he positively emphasised them by attempting to make a hero of Posthumus Leonatus. The vulgarity, credulity, and treacherous cruelty which are conceivable enough in Messer Bernabo of Genoa, a name and nothing more, become glaringly incredible in the belauded Posthumus. The vulgarity is inherent in the very idea of the wager, and could scarcely have been toned down; but the hand which wrote the third act of *Othello* could surely have made more plausible the credulity with which Posthumus falls into Iachimo's snare. Shakespeare, however, was intent on other matters. He had no thought to waste

either on psychological niceties or on the skilful exposition and rational disentanglement of his theme. The masque of spirits, and the extravagantly unnecessary god from the machine, were no doubt imposed upon him by some consideration of theatrical convenience, much as a ballet was, until lately, imposed on an operatic composer. The artist must intentionally have given place, at this point, to the manager. It is vain to argue that the scene is spurious. Even if some one else wrote the rhymes (and I see no reason to suppose so), the blank verse is certainly Shakespeare's, and he had carefully prepared for the passage in the very first scene of the play. This deliberate concession to the multitude, however, is not to be classed among the lapses of taste to which I am here referring. It is the unconscious extravagances that seem to me to show some abnormality in the poet's mental state—for instance, the gratuitous brutality of such speeches as that of Arviragus to Belarius :

" The bier at the door,
And a demand who is't shall die, I'd say
' My father, not this youth ' ; "

or that of Imogen to Lucius :

" Your life, good master,
Must shuffle for itself. "

An alert taste would have recoiled from such wantonnesses. Moreover, along with a diction and versification bearing every mark of the poet's latest manner, we find reversions to his earliest manner in the frequency of rhymed exit-speeches, the extreme artificiality of some of the conceits, and the use of such laboured mythological allusion as Imogen's :

“ I know the shape of his leg; this is his hand;
His foot Mercurial; his Martial thigh;
The brawns of Hercules: but his Jovial face—
Murder in heaven?—How?—’Tis gone.—Pisanio,
All curses madded Hecuba gave the Greeks,
And mine to boot, be darted on thee!”

“What’s Hecuba to her, or she to Hecuba?” It is true that Shakespeare’s taste was at no period quite secure from such lapses; but their frequency in this play, along with the heedlessness of essentials and intentness upon fantastic details which mark its structure and development, seems to me to indicate a temporary disturbance of that perfect mental equilibrium which goes to the making of a masterpiece.

There was one thing, happily, which Shakespeare could always do with unerring instinct, however sluggish or overwrought his faculties might otherwise be. He could always draw a delightful woman; and Imogen, the very rarest, perhaps, of all her incom-

parable sisterhood, richly atones for the defects in the conception and conduct of the play. She has one or two speeches which, from the point of view of style, and even of feeling, one cannot but regret; but in all essentials she deserves the utmost that Shakespearolatry itself has found to say of her. There is no more radiant and exquisite creation in romantic poetry. "She is alone the Arabian bird."

Pray do not suppose that I put forth as a great discovery this suggestion that *Cymbeline* may have been written at a time when the wheels of Shakespeare's intellect were whirling a little faster than is quite consistent with what we call the sanity of genius. Give me another column or two, and I am quite prepared to demolish the theory by showing that it could be applied with almost equal plausibility to almost any other play of the whole three dozen. Mark these two "almosts," however; I do seriously think, until further notice, that Shakespeare's characteristic inadvertences are here carried to an abnormal pitch, and that there is something a trifle hectic about the whole working-out of the tragi-comedy. It is redeemed from failure by the figure of Imogen, the scenic effectiveness of the Iachimo intrigue, and the freshness of the idyllic passages; but as a drama it certainly cannot rank high. To show how it has divided the critics, let me print side by side Hazlitt's judgment of it and Johnson's:

HAZLITT.

"The most straggling and seemingly casual incidents are contrived in such a manner as to lead at last to the most complete development of the catastrophe. The ease and conscious unconcern with which this is effected only makes the skill more wonderful."

JOHNSON.

"To remark the folly of the fiction, the absurdity of the conduct, . . . and the impossibility of the events in any system of life, were to waste criticism upon unresisting imbecility, upon faults too evident for detection, and too gross for aggravation."

We need not, fortunately, accept either of these dicta without reserve; but I know which of them seems to me nearer the mark.

What I have to say of the Lyceum version and of its presentation must keep till next week. In the meantime, let me briefly call attention to an ingenious and pathetic French melodrama, *Two Little Vagabonds*, at the Princess's Theatre, whither tender souls may be recommended to betake themselves with a plentiful reserve of pocket-handkerchiefs.

XXXVI.

"CYMBELINE" AGAIN—"TWO LITTLE
VAGABONDS."

7th October.

SIR HENRY IRVING'S stage-arrangement of *Cymbeline* is in effect a ruthless criticism of the play. In general,

I am no friend to managerial criticism of this sort. To be quite frank, when I realised how freely Sir Henry Irving had laid about him with the pruning-knife, an indignant remonstrance rushed to the tip of my pen. But I reflected that, before giving rein to my eloquence, it might be wise to make a close comparison of the two texts, and to give chapter and verse, or rather act, scene, and line, in support of my accusations of—shall we say Dalyism? But as I proceeded in my comparison, scoring through in the full text those passages which had disappeared from the Lyceum version, my wrath gradually oozed out at my finger-tips. The cuts are certainly unsparing—a good half of the text has gone by the board—but, except at two points, it is really impossible to say that anything of great value has been sacrificed. Here and there a line or phrase is deleted that might better have been retained, but there is no mutilation that makes the heart bleed, as did a score of Mr. Daly's gashes in (for example) *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Where one is inclined to plead for a restoration, it is generally rather for the sake of metrical continuity, than on account of any great value, dramatic or poetic, in the lines omitted. For instance, it seems a pity to cut the words italicised in the following speech of Belarius :—

"Come, our stomachs
Will make what's homely, savoury : *weariness*

*Can snore upon the flint, when resty sloth
Finds the down pillow hard.*—Now, peace be here,
Poor house, that keep'st thyself!"

This excision gives an ugly wound to the metre ; and so does the following, in a speech of Imogen's :—

"So please you, leave me ;
*Stick to your journal course : the breach of custom
Is breach of all.* I am ill ; but your being by me
Cannot amend me."

In this case, too, the words omitted are charming in themselves, and ought really to be restored. But in the main it is marvellous, not to say startling, to find that one half of a play belonging to the "serene close" of Shakespeare's career can be cut away without stirring even a purist like myself to any frenzy of regret. The two passages which one does very sensibly miss are, of course, the scene between Imogen and Pisanio in the first act, and the last two stanzas of the dirge. There is nothing more beautiful in the play than Imogen's :

"Or ere I could
Give him that parting kiss, which I had set
Betwixt two charming-words, comes in my father,
And, like the tyrannous breathing of the north,
Shakes all our buds from growing."

The compression of the opening scenes, moreover,

involves an absurdity in the Queen's question to Pisanio, "Weeps she still, say'st thou?" not five minutes after the departure of Posthumus. Here, too, the metre is terribly mishandled. To take only one example out of half a score, "Nay, stay a little; look here, love," figures as one of Imogen's lines—a barbarous cacophony. What she actually says is—

"Nay, stay a little.
Were you but riding forth to air yourself,
Such parting were too petty. Look here, love :
This diamond was my mother's : take it, heart."

On the whole, Sir Henry Irving's curtailment of the first act is excessive and at some points indefensible; nor can I imagine a good defence for robbing the dirge of all its effect by cutting off the very part which gives it something of a ceremonial character. If anything must be omitted, let it be the second stanza. We could spare, at a pinch,

"The sceptre, learning, physic, must
All follow this, and come to dust,"

but not that exquisite variation :

"All lovers young, all lovers must
Consign to thee, and come to dust."

By-the-bye, how has the absurd reading :

"Under her breast—
Worthy *her* pressing—lies a mole," etc.,

crept into the Lyceum text? When I heard it on the first night, I took it for a mere slip of the tongue; but I find it is a misprint of the 1623 folio, which was corrected by Rowe, the first editor. One subsequent editor, Capel (according to the "Henry Irving Shakespeare"), defended the "her" as a "delicate compliment"—to whom, or what, I wonder? To me, it seems to make arrant nonsense; even the "Henry Irving" editors find nothing to say for it. To cut half the play and then preserve a misprint is surely a fine instance of the camel and the gnat.

Iachimo is quite in Sir Henry Irving's line, and he makes a striking, memorable figure of him. Shakespeare probably conceived a younger, lighter, more irresponsible villain—a stinging gad-fly rather than a rattlesnake. Sicilius in the vision, addressing Jupiter, says:

" Why did you suffer Iachimo,
Slight thing of Italy,
To taint his nobler heart and brain
With needless jealousy——"

and in the phrase "slight thing of Italy," the writer, whether Shakespeare or another, seems to me to have expressed Shakespeare's idea. Now, Sir Henry Irving's Iachimo is not a "slight thing" at all. He is a subtle, tenebrous, deadly creature, beside whom Posthumus, in the person of Mr. Frank Cooper, is a very "slight thing" indeed. But his acting is ex-

tremely artistic, both in what he does and in what he refrains from doing. He seemed to me, in fact, to refrain almost too sternly from the cheap by-play of the commonplace villain. There were times, for instance, in the scene with Imogen, when his show of moral earnestness almost took me in for the moment. It is a nice question whether it be not an over-refinement, a supersubtlety, to let the audience forget that he is playing a part within a part.

Miss Terry's Imogen is a delightful performance, certainly one of the most charming things she has ever done. In her letter on the character of Imogen, Helen Faucit (Lady Martin) quotes a couplet from *Faust* which might have been coined for Miss Ellen Terry:

" Die Schönheit bleibt sich selber selig,
Die Anmuth macht unwiderstehlich."

Miss Terry has "Anmuth" if ever woman had, and it indeed makes her Imogen irresistible. She has temperament, and she has scenic instinct; and as far as these two gifts can take her, she goes with charming effect. They cannot, however, take her quite to the heart of Imogen. In order to get there, she would require a sense of character, a power of composition, and a technical skill which she does not possess. The pure, or rather the abstract, woman in Imogen she gives us to perfec-

tion, but the individuality, the differentia of Shakespeare's creation, she misses. There is a world of meaning, a revelation of delicacy and nobility, in many of Imogen's phrases—such as the famous

“My lord, I fear,
Has forgot Britain——”

which Miss Terry neither suspects nor suggests. It may be a moot point how far Imogen really softens to Iachimo when he professes that he was only testing her “affiance.” For my part, I find nothing in what she says inconsistent with the very coldest courtesy, scarcely cloaking her resentment of the gross and cruel impertinence of which, at the very least, he has just been guilty. On this point, however, Shakespeare is not explicit. He *may* intend (as Lady Martin seems to think) that Imogen shall be so charmed by Iachimo's praises of Posthumus as really to forget his recent insults both to her husband and herself. Miss Terry, in any case, not only reads the scene in this light, but treats Iachimo with an effusive cordiality which goes quite beyond the utmost relenting that Shakespeare can possibly be held to intend. Even before the phrase “You make amends” (a dry enough utterance, by the way), she accompanies Iachimo's eulogy of her husband with eager exclamations of “Yes! yes!” which seem to me entirely out of place. It is a

question, I admit, whether she ought to treat Iachimo frostily (though I am strongly of that opinion), but there can surely be no question that if she is to thaw at all, it must be slowly. Then in the passages with Pisanio after he has revealed to her the purpose of the journey to Milford Haven, Miss Terry shows delightful womanliness, but not, I think, the womanliness of this particular woman. We miss the absolute dignity and sweetness of Imogen. Such speeches as the exquisite "False to his bed," etc., and

"Come, here's my heart ;
Something's afore't ; soft, soft ! We'll no defence,"

are vehement and almost shrewish rather than instinct with the tender irony of loving reproach. In short, Miss Terry does not imaginatively body forth Shakespeare's Imogen; she simply throws herself into the situations and does what her instinct suggests. The result is a real and charming woman, if not a poet's ideal.

In the mounting, which is beautiful throughout, I noticed only one serious defect. Imogen's bedroom did not at all correspond with Iachimo's description of it. The various articles he mentions may all have been there; but the gloomy cavern was not in the least like the splendid Renaissance chamber which Shakespeare indubitably conceived. "What !" Sir Henry Irving may no doubt exclaim. "A Re-

naissance chamber in Britain during the reign of Augustus!" Why not? The whole play is one vast anachronism. What is the use of attempting fidelity to a period of which we know nothing (the Lyceum costumes, whatever they may be, are certainly not those of Britain in the first century), and a period, moreover, which Shakespeare himself flouts at every turn? Both the artistic and the scenically effective course would have been to reproduce the room which Shakespeare evidently had in his mind's eye. We do not want an object-lesson in the domestic architecture of Britain in the first century; and whether we want it or not, we don't get it. Clearly the thing to do was to give us a beautiful picture and let archæology go hang.

In *Two Little Vagabonds** at the Princess's (which I mentioned briefly last week) there is one situation of really remarkable power and pathos. The author, M. Pierre Decourcelle, certainly possesses that gift of invention which has so abounded in France, at any rate from the days of Scribe, and in which we English, from Shakespeare downwards, have been so strangely deficient. It is not the highest of dramatic faculties, but neither is it at all to be despised. Only the very best of our living dramatists possess any trace of it. What playwright of the status of M. Decourcelle has ever invented a fable half as ingenious and interesting

* September 23—still running.

as that of *Les Deux Gosses*? It starts, to be sure, from an inconceivable and brutal absurdity; but that once accepted, the sequel is deduced with admirable skill. The complicated recognition-scene, in which the transports of the mother and her long-lost son are checked by compassion for the poor consumptive child who has been wrongly recognised and whom they have not the heart to disillusion, is most ingeniously worked up to a very high pitch of pathos. It is, indeed, "contrived a double debt to pay"—you can no more help weeping over it when you see it than you can help laughing at it when you recall it to mind. Miss Kate Tyndall and Miss Sydney Fairbrother are excellent as the Two Little Vagabonds; Mr. Ernest Leicester, Miss Geraldine Olliffe, and Mr. Edmund Gurney are as good as need be; and the adaptors, Messrs. G. R. Sims and Arthur Shirley, seem to have done their work skilfully and discreetly.

The one redeeming feature in an utterly futile and childish farce by Mr. Fergus Hume, produced at the Strand Theatre, under the title of *Teddy's Wives*,* was Mr. Fred Thorne's grotesque impersonation of a tobacco-shop Scotchman, at which it was possible to raise an occasional smile.

* September 24—December 30.

XXXVII.

“THE WHITE SILK DRESS”—“THE BELLE OF
CAIRO”—“MR. MARTIN.”

14th October.

SURELY we are getting to the lees of musical farce. Though not compounded of the finest or most wholesome elements, the draught was at first bright and sparkling enough. Now it begins to run flat and muddy, with no scintilla of real gaiety about it. The public, I am bound to say, does not as yet seem to know the difference. It takes people a long time to realise that they are bored; but unless librettists and comedians pull themselves together, the mirthless laughter which now greets their efforts will presently tail off into a vast, irrepressible yawn. The Peasant-Millionaire, in Raimund's Viennese folk-play of that name, is recommended to try an elixir of wisdom, warranted to sharpen the faculties. He is to pay twenty pounds a bottle for it; “and when you've taken a hundred bottles,” says the proprietor of the patent medicine, “a light will suddenly burst upon you, and you'll see what a fool you've been.” Give us a few more pieces like *The White Silk Dress*,* at the Prince of Wales's, and I cannot but think that a light

* October 3—February 19.

will suddenly burst upon the British public. The author, Mr. H. J. W. Dam, is not, of course, solely responsible for the ineptitude of the production; but even after eliminating, so far as possible, the intermixture of sheer gagging and incoherent buffoonery, one seeks in vain for any humour in the original idea, any relevance, even of caricature, in the characters, any wit or felicity in the lyrics. Mr. Dam may plead, however—and of course he is quite right—that such qualities would be hopelessly thrown away on a piece intended for Mr. Arthur Roberts. Where Mr. Roberts is to be the life and soul of the entertainment, it is futile to think of putting any other sort of life or soul into it. Now Mr. Roberts, in his palmy days, used to be a quaint and irresistible compound of freakish humour, pantomimic adroitness, and racy vulgarity. As time has gone on, he has altered the proportions of the mixture, so that the third element has drowned the other two. His public still accepts him and laughs at him, just as Diggory laughed at the story of Grouse in the gun-room—because an old habit is not easily unlearned. I understand that the first night of *The White Silk Dress* was not entirely auspicious; but when I saw it, on the fourth or fifth night, though Mr. Roberts had not even then quite settled down into his patter, and would frequently repeat himself and babble he knew not what, the crowded audience seemed nevertheless to relish his

humour as much as ever. There is a limit, however, even to the fidelity of the public to its amusers, and we surely cannot long succeed in persuading ourselves that there is any sort of entertainment to be got out of the long-drawn vulgarity of Mr. Roberts's catalogue (addressed to Miss Decima Moore) of the furniture of their flat. "Musical Farce," by the way, is a misnomer for this production. Though three composers have been engaged upon it—Messrs. A. McLean, R. Somerville, and G. Byng—it contains very little music, and that little is absolutely unimportant.

At the Court Theatre, on the other hand, Mr. F. Kinsey Peile, being librettist and composer in one, is nothing if not melodious. With the assistance of Mr. Cecil Raleigh, he has compounded, in *The Belle of Cairo*,* a hybrid entertainment which may perhaps be described as an up-to-date musico-farcical military melodrama. Preposterous though it be, the piece is not quite unentertaining. In spite of its novelty of scene, it is concocted strictly according to recipe. Everything that the public is known to demand, Mr. Kinsey Peile conscientiously supplies. The curtain has not been up ten minutes when the casual mention of the word "duty" gives the cue for the indispensable "Tommy Atkins" song, the usual piece of insincere and blatant braggadocio, with the cornet, as though in contemptuous mimicry, echoing the last phrase of

* October 10—December 19.

every line. The chorus of this inspiring ditty is really a masterpiece after its kind:

" An Englishman must march to glory,
 An Englishman must thrash the foe;
 Each Englishman repeats the story,
 As Englishmen have done, you know.
 No Englishman knows when he's beaten,
 Each Englishman does all he can—
 From days of Rugby, Harrow, Eton,
 An English boy's an Englishman."

After this your ordinary music-hall Tyrtæus may well break his tom-tom in despair—the force of bluster can no further go. But at this sort of thing "No Englishman knows when he's beaten," and we shall doubtless have it all over again in the next musical farce. Having thus done his devoirs to patriotism, in stirring Dorian strains, Mr. Kinsey l'ëile next turns to Lydian measures, and gives us the no less indispensable "Naughty little twinkle in her eye" song, in this case entitled "Betsy Jane's Dimple." It is absolutely stupid, but the suggestion is unmistakable, and that, it would seem, is all the public demands. Then, to complete the brew, we have the irresistible plantation chant with *sotto voce* refrain, in two different versions. True, the chorus consists of Fellaheen instead of darkies: but the method and effect are exactly those of the "coon" songs in which Miss May Yohé may almost be said

to have made her fame. It must be added that Mr. Kinsey Peile has a distinct knack of turning out "catchy" choruses. There are ten or a dozen whistlable rhythms in *The Belle of Cairo*, and two of them, "The Hour of Prayer" and "The Hoo Poo Bird," are really pretty. The poet-composer's plan is to give us a verse of flat and meaningless declamation, and then to burst forth into a tripping refrain helped out with every commonplace device of orchestration. There is merit of a kind in these refrains, which will probably make the success of the production. Its other strong points are the piquancy and popularity of Miss May Yohé, whose voice, however, has sadly deteriorated; the wonderfully agile dancing of Mr. Arthur Nelstone, who has also some ability as a comedian; the singing of Miss Giulia Warwick; and the really admirable scenery, painted by Mr. Henry Emden. There could scarcely be a prettier stage picture than the twilight scene in Cairo which brings the first act to a close. In the small space at his command, Mr. Emden has here produced an original and charming effect.

I wish I could congratulate Mr. Charles Hawtrey on his first appearance (is it the first, by the way?) as a dramatist; but the cleverness which some critics have found in *Mr. Martin** entirely escaped me. It seemed to me notably deficient in construction, in

* October 3—November 13.

characterisation, and even in that instinct for momentary stage effect which sometimes redeems otherwise feeble plays written by actors. Of one thing I am sure—to wit, that Mr. Hawtrey had not succeeded in giving himself a reasonably good part. He is said to imitate some living original—a futile proceeding, when all we ask of him is that he should be himself. The best character in the piece was the delightfully unprincipled Sophia O'Flanagan, capitably acted by Miss Rose Leclercq. There was also a memorable moment in Miss Lottie Venne's part, when Maudie Vavasour, "the Glittering Star of Erin," was overcome by tender memories of the husband who had ill-treated and deserted her. The three sobs with which Miss Venne wound up this effusion of pathos touched the very summit of propriety in dramatic expression.

XXXVIII.

"UNDER THE RED ROBE."

21st October.

IF there were anything in the so-called rules of dramatic construction, *Under the Red Robe** ought to fail; as there is, I am convinced, nothing

* October 17—still running.

whatever in them, or at least no practical importance, the *Rose-Weyman* romance may very likely fill the Haymarket for months. No canon is more firmly established—none, indeed, has a greater show of reason on its side—than that which declares irresolution to be the most fatal vice with which a theatrical hero can be afflicted. An audience, say the theorists, can never take any interest in a vacillating character, “this way and that dividing the swift mind.” Action, they aver, is the essence of drama; the protagonist who is to interest us in the theatre must impose his will on his fellows, or shatter it against the adamantine barriers of destiny. A man may waver in romance as much as he pleases; on the stage, we spell waver “wobble.” The only disadvantage of this highly plausible theory is that you can cite at least as many cases in disproof as in proof of it. The most successful play in the world, beyond all comparison, is the tragedy of irresolution; and if you search the drama through, you will find the specifically resolute heroes in a clear minority. There are not many, however, who wobble so helplessly, and at the same time so blusterously, as Mr. Rose’s *Gil de Berault*. Placed between two conflicting parties, he betrays each in turn, until at last, like the audience, he loses count, and says to himself, “I am a traitor, but traitor to which side?”—yet he blazes with

virtuous indignation the moment either party suspects him of treachery. The unction with which he says, again and again, "Do you think I would be false to the hand that pays me?" is as impressive as though the sentiment were the most chivalrous in the world; and all the time he has been false, and is false, and the only element of truth in his bluster lies in the fact that he is equally false to the other hand, the hand that caresses him. In the way of complicated and pretentious baseness, I know nothing to beat his attitude at the end of the second act, when he bamboozles the simple-minded Renée into abjectly begging his pardon for accusing him of a crime which he in fact committed, and which is, as it were, still in progress. And the worst of it is that his wobbling not only deprives him alike of our sympathy as a hero, and of our admiration as a villain, but also discounts the part of Renée by making her oscillate incessantly between suspicion and contrition. The same situation recurs over and over again, or, more precisely, two situations keep waltzing round and round through two long acts. According to rule, then, and even according to reason, the play is not a good one; but there is life and movement in it, the costumes are picturesque, the acting spirited, and it has the popularity of the novel to advertise it. Personally, I found it amusing enough; I have

spent many duller evenings of late. No doubt I should have enjoyed it more heartily, and should write of it more cordially, if I did not feel that this sort of easy-going paste-and-scissors play-making was stopping the way for work of greater interest and importance. After all, *Under the Red Robe* exists already, and exists in the form proper to its idea. But Mr. Shaw's new play, and Mr. Esmond's, do not exist, and cannot exist, apart from the stage; and here we have their production indefinitely postponed, while one of the few remaining outlets for non-musical drama is given over to a mutilated novel. I blame nobody, least of all Mr. Edward Rose, who is honestly and ably supplying a legitimate demand; but I wish novel-readers could be induced to take their pleasures at home, and leave the stage, or at least one or two theatres, to the drama.

Not having read the novel, I can offer no opinion as to how much, or how little, Mr. Weyman's work has suffered at Mr. Rose's hands. What is clear to me is that Mr. Rose, as a dramatist, has suffered from having to follow more or less closely the lines of the story. The theme is strong and dramatic; but a dramatist, working with a free hand, would have moulded it quite differently. The long series of adventures, in which the charm of the novel no doubt consists, would have been omitted altogether.

Interest would have been concentrated, first, on the growing passion of the spy for the woman he has been sent forth to betray, secondly, on some single crisis in which he should have to choose, once for all, between his mission and his love, knowing that the non-fulfilment of his mission will be punished with death. As it is, the passion is taken for granted, and the crisis is frittered away in a succession of petty incidents, during which Berault is busily engaged in undignified, ineffectual endeavours to run with the hare and hunt with the hounds. The general impression one receives from the second and third acts is that Cardinal Richelieu must be singularly unfortunate in the choice of his instruments, who, even if Berault had not (more or less) gone over to the enemy, would simply have succeeded in cutting each other's throats. For my part, what I liked best in these acts was the comic relief provided by Mr. Cyril Maude in the character of a sort of military Bob Acres. I was sincerely grieved when the dumb servant, Clon, jumped into a chasm in the back-garden of the château with Captain Larolle in his arms—an incident which would have been much more effective, by the way, if we had been youchsafed some previous indication of the existence of that yawning abyss. From me, at any rate, it had effectually concealed its yawn up to the moment of Clon's header. The first and last acts chiefly

entertained me by their undisguised resemblance to our dear old friend *Richelieu*. The wily Cardinal seems to have been an inveterate matchmaker, and to have pursued the same genially jocose method in every instance. His dialogue, alas! is docked of its Lyttonian opulence; but he has one priceless saying. Two minutes after he has received the King's missive restoring him to power, "It shall never be forgotten," he says to Berault, "that you were my one client on the Day of Dupes!"* This reminds one of the play in which Napoleon, being tempted to do something unworthy of the page of history, checks himself with the words, "No! not on the eve of Austerlitz!" or of the college essay in which the Athenians were said to have "enjoyed the inspiring consciousness of living in the fifth century B.C."

Mr. Herbert Waring made Gil de Berault immensely popular, and played, indeed, with grace, gallantry, and feeling. He was not quite enough of the *spadassin*, perhaps, to realise what I understand to have been Mr. Weyman's intention in the

* Mr. Rose argues that some one must have been the first to call this day "The Day of Dupes," and why not Richelieu? True; why not? In making this remonstrance, Mr. Rose also supplied me with a better instance of historic prescience than either of those above cited—that of a gentleman in some unnamed play who parts from his lady-love with the words, "Adieu! To-morrow we begin the Thirty Years' War!"

character. Miss Winifred Emery was charming as the heroine. She played the part entirely on the surface; but what else could she do? It is really no character at all, and entirely unworthy of her. Mr. Valentine was quietly effective as the Cardinal, and Mr. Bernard Gould, Mr. Holman Clark, and Miss Eva Moore were all excellent.

XXXIX.

"LOVE IN IDLENESS"—MR. HARE'S ECCLES—"THE PRISONER OF ZENDA"—"HIS LITTLE DODGE"—"THE STORM."

28th October.

BECAUSE it is produced at Terry's Theatre with Mr. Edward Terry in the leading part, and because it is a delicate and amiable piece of work, *Love in Idleness** has very naturally been compared to *Sweet Lavender*. But between Mr. Pinero's play and Messrs. Parker and Goodman's the resemblances are merely external. *Sweet Lavender*, with all its whimsicality, is a serious comedy, bordering here and there on drama. *Love in Idleness* stands in a totally different relation to life.

* October 21—December 19. Afterwards played at afternoon performances (three or four in each week) along with *The Holly Tree Inn*, from December 28 to February 18.

There is, however, another popular play to which it presents exact and essential analogies—to wit, *A Pair of Spectacles*. These two pieces may be classed together as fable-fantasies, dramatic apologues, or what Artemus Ward would have called “moral wax-works.” No one for a moment accepts them as conceivable pictures of life; they exist in virtue of the ingenuity of manipulation by which every incident is made to bear on the central idea. They belong essentially to the same class of literature as *Candide* or *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*; but a nearer, yet infinitely remoter, prototype (and this, too, a drama after a fashion) may be found in the Book of Job. The collocation is not so fantastic as you think. To both *Love in Idleness* and *A Pair of Spectacles* a “Prologue in Heaven” might quite well be prefixed, showing how the Spirits of Good and Evil entered into a conspiracy to make an object-lesson of Benjamin Goldfinch in the one case, Mortimer Pendlebury in the other. Unless we assume some such compact, indeed, how are we to account for the suddenness with which these heroes (like Job) are beset with misfortunes from every point of the compass, and the equal suddenness with which (again like the much-tried patriarch) they are restored to prosperity? It is clear that supernatural agencies of some sort must in each case have set themselves, by a mild experiment in vivisection, to illustrate a moral

principle—enforcing, in *A Pair of Spectacles*, the essential justice of an optimistic view of life; in *Love in Idleness*, the dangers of procrastination on the one hand, on the other of "raw haste, half-sister to delay." It is as dramatic apologues, then, that these plays resemble the Book of Job and differ from *Sweet Lavender* and other plays which purport to be representations of life, either serious or burlesque. Such pieces may, of course, have an incidental moral; but it is not, as in the apologue-play, at once their starting-point and their goal—their enunciation and their *Q.E.D.* Even in the French *Proverbe*, the moral may be said to lurk behind the picture of life; here the picture of life, if so it can be called, serves as a mere arabesque to throw the moral into relief.

And the odd thing is that, when all is said and done, we care nothing about the moral, while the fable, the fairy-tale, the absurd and arbitrary rearrangement of life, amuses and pleases us in and for itself. It is not so pretty and ingenious in *Love in Idleness* as in *A Pair of Spectacles*, but still, in its simple way, it is agreeable enough. The piece is not only inoffensive, but genuinely humorous, and has the great merit of improving as it goes on. The second act is more entertaining than the first, and the third than the second. Moreover, though the primary moral, so to speak, is too obvious to be worth insisting on, a secondary lesson of some importance disengages

itself (with or without the authors' intention) from the character of Mortimer Pendlebury. His laziness and his energy are both extravagantly overdone, as, indeed, the laws of this semi-infantile art-form demand that they should be. But his hopeless and helpless unpracticality is more soberly indicated, and has a certain typical relevance. In his fantastic way, he is a good instance of that almost criminal ignorance of the world and obtuseness to the facts of life, of which, in more serious art, Colonel Newcome is the classical example. This class of well-meaning blunderers is, of course, to be distinguished from the Harold Skimpole class, who cannot be called well-meaning—the egoists who make a merit, or at any rate a jest, of their lack of insight and competence in the ways of the world. But the excellence of Mortimer Pendlebury's intentions does not make the ineptitude of his actions the less disastrous; and the one practical moral resulting from the "moral waxwork" is, I fear, effectually nullified when everything comes right in the end. To consider so, however, is to consider too rigidly. After all, a comedy must be a comedy; even the Book of Job, though rather verging towards melodrama, comes to a happy ending; and we feel that if Fate acquits Mr. Pendlebury this time, in consideration of his previous good character, she accompanies the acquittal with an emphatic warning "not to do it again."

Mr. Edward Terry is delightful as Mortimer Pendlebury. It is the best part he has had since Dick Phenyl, and he quite rises to the occasion. Next to Mr. Terry, Mr. De Lange carried off the honours of the evening. There was originality as well as humour in his performance of the Frenchman who permits no trifling with the proprieties. The other actors had no great opportunities, but were as good as need be.

Mr. John Hare's farewell performance at the Lyceum on Saturday afternoon* was pleasant, not only in itself, but by reason of the expressions of cordial and unfeigned good-will which it elicited from the audience. There is no actor on the stage more justly popular than Mr. Hare, and there was certainly no one in the crowded house who did not heartily wish him God-speed on his visit to America; while, for my part, I mentally added a vow for his safe return to a theatre of his own. His Eccles in *Caste* was a most entertaining and admirable performance. To say that it threw new light on the character would be absurd, for there is no new light to be thrown. Eccles is a quite simple and obvious personage, demanding, not subtlety of comprehension, but skill, one might almost say virtuosity, of execution. Mr. Hare, a comedian at once accomplished and restrained, missed no point and overdid no point.

* October 24.

His performance was delightful in every respect, but it was not so rich and fruity as the Eccles of George Honey, or of that excellent actor, J. F. Young. There are, I understand, two sorts of gin, sweetened and unsweetened. I am not expert in the difference between these two beverages, but Mr. Hare's Eccles somehow suggests to me unsweetened gin, in comparison with the oily, luscious, highly-sweetened spirit with which Mr. Young's heroic toper seemed to reek. Eccles is perhaps the one live personage whom we owe to the drama of the sixties—ay, and the seventies to boot. It is possible to make of him a colossal type of moral and physical degradation, a ferocious satire on humanity. There is nothing colossal in Mr. Hare's Eccles; it may almost be called a statuette, under rather than over life-size. But if it is small in scale it is masterly in finish and exquisitely amusing. Mr. Gilbert Hare's Sam Gerridge has developed into a very able performance, and Miss May Harvey's Polly more than justifies the good opinion I entertained of it from the first. One phrase Miss Harvey has not quite mastered, the twice repeated "Father is a very clever man." What is wrong with it I cannot tell, but it somehow does not come in naturally. For the rest, Miss Harvey is most successful in indicating the good heart under the pert manner, and her recognition of George is really excellent.

I genuinely enjoyed *The Prisoner of Zenda** on its reproduction at the St. James's; but, that I might say this with a clear conscience, I thought it best to come away before the last act. The story is ingenious, dramatic, altogether charming; if a more agreeable end could be found for it (I don't mean a "happy ending," but one less painful to the eye and ear), it might quite well outlive its immediate vogue, and become one of the stock plays of the next half century. Would it be any less popular, I wonder, if certain of the actors, whom it is needless to specify, refrained from clowning their parts at every possible opportunity? The piece did not seem to me to gain or lose much by the changes in the cast. Miss Neilson, as the Princess Flavia, looked a Queen every inch of her, and that is saying a good deal. Her acting, too, appeared to me all that was required—no less and no more. I think, on the whole, I preferred Miss Millard in the part, but I should be puzzled to give a reason for my preference. Mr. C. Aubrey Smith was good as Duke Wolfgang in the prologue, much less good as Black Michael in the play. Miss Ellis Jeffreys, as Antoinette, seemed unnecessarily loud, and Mr. H. B. Irving, as Hentzau, unnecessarily underbred. Of the original cast there remain, besides Mr. Alexander himself, Mr. Allan Aynesworth as Bertram, Mr. Arthur Royston as Fritz von Tarlenheim,

* October 20—November 28 (see p. 12).

Mr. George Bancroft as Lord Topham, Miss Mabel Hackney, who plays the Countess of Rassendyll in the prologue very gracefully and pleasantly, and Mr. W. H. Vernon, whose bluff and Bismarckian Colonel Sapt is a tower of strength to the production.

If Colonel Newcome, already mentioned in this article, had been so rash as to take Clive to the Royalty Theatre last Saturday evening, he would certainly have marched out again at a very early stage in the proceedings. *His Little Dodge*,* adapted by Mr. J. H. McCarthy from *Le Système Ribadier* of MM. Feydeau and Hennequin, is a very full-flavoured smoking-room story, told with a good deal of cleverness on the part both of the authors and the adaptor. Personally, I don't object to this sort of thing, so long as we have no hypocrisy about it. The piece is far from being one of those imbecilities whose sole attraction lies in their nastiness. The situations in the second act are highly ingenious. One of them, indeed—where Lady Little, in the presence of Mandeville Hobb, seems on the point of relating the earlier part of her supposed dream—is one of the most diverting I can remember. In the third act, the cynicism of the earlier scenes passes over into repulsiveness, and ceases to be entertaining; but, on the whole, it is a play one can laugh at, just as one laughs at a loose mediæval *novella*. So far so good;

* October 29—January 16.

as aforesaid, I have no objection; only I think it is high time we should recognise and admit that, so far as the stage is concerned, "decency" is an obsolete term. Those supporters of the Censorship who see in it a bulwark against the encroachments of Puritanism may point in triumph to the recent history of the Royalty Theatre. It is certainly the Censorship that makes possible such plays as *The New Baby* and *His Little Dodge*, or, in other words, enables the stage to reflect the growing licence of thought and speech which is so marked a trait of the present decade. I am far from asserting that this tendency is an unmixed evil; only I wish I felt sure that the licence accorded to farce, musical or unmusical, would be accompanied by reasonable freedom for serious drama—if ever we have any serious drama again.

The farce is capitally acted by Mr. Fred Terry, Mr. Weedon Grossmith, and Miss Ellis Jeffreys, who contrives to make her part almost inoffensive. It is preceded by a one-act play entitled *The Storm*, by Mr. Ian Robertson, which is simply *Le Luthier de Crémone* with the plot omitted. It was well acted by Mr. H. V. Esmond, Mr. H. B. Irving, and Miss Dorothy Hammond, and was very favourably received.

XI.

A STUDY OF MUSICAL FARCE—"DONNA DIANA."

11th November.

THE question whether dramatic critics should pay for their stalls is one on which I cannot work up any fierce ardour of conviction; but I am sure it would do us all a power of good to go occasionally, nay, frequently, to the pit. I do so myself when I want to see a piece a second time; but, as a rule, life is too short for this indulgence; and, except *Rosemary* perhaps, nothing has been produced this many a long day that any sane man, of his own free will, would go to see more than once. Consequently I have got rather out of touch with the pit of late, and it was almost a new sensation to find myself last Saturday night dodging uneasily to and fro in order to catch an occasional glimpse of the Duke of York's stage between a pillar and a monumental hat. The hat was most amiably removed at my suggestion, so that ultimately I had a very fair view of *The Gay Parisienne*,* which, for some reason or other, I had not seen before. The piece has run for over a hundred nights, and is, I gather, a quite genuine success.

* April 4—March 27.

Criticism, therefore, would be out of date ; and indeed I did not go to criticise, but to study, the production. I wanted to observe musical farce from this new point of view, and realise more clearly the elements in its attractiveness. Not that there is any mystery in the matter. The charms of this style of entertainment are obvious enough ; but it is sometimes useful to analyse and formulate even the obvious.

It would be straining a point to say that I enjoyed *The Gay Parisienne* because I saw it from the pit ; but in a certain sense I enjoyed the enjoyment of those around me. I felt that these were the people to whom this sort of thing was really addressed—the people whose relish for it one could understand and pardon. I do not quite know how to describe my fellow-pittites without using terms to which modern snobbery has added an undertone of contempt. Suffice it to say that the great majority of them were young men and young women who evidently worked hard for their living, at the desk or behind the counter, and had come out to find relaxation after the wearing labour of the week. Their code of manners, though not essentially bad, was quite unsophisticated ; they had no time for culture or thought, no eye for refinements of character, no sense of moral or social problems. They were not at all dense or stolid ; they had picked up from the

newspapers and the scrap-papers a very fair notion of what is going on in the world; indeed, being myself but a perfunctory news-reader, I noticed that they rose to several allusions which were Hebrew to me. But their interest in life was entirely superficial, uncritical, unselective. Any allusion, whatever its tone or tendency, was sufficient to delight them. If only something was mentioned that they knew about, they did not care what was said on the subject, or whether anything intelligible was said at all. What evidently took best, indeed, was a sort of deliberate vagueness, the "You know what I mean" effect implied in an adroit reticence (an "aposiopesis" the rhetoricians call it) helped out with a nod, a wink, or a grimace. There was not, in the whole production, a single appeal to intelligence or enthusiasm, scarcely even to sentiment; but it swarmed with appeals to what I may call common knowingness in political and social matters, conventional cynicism on questions of character and morals. We were all immensely flattered in the pit on being, so to speak, treated on terms of sympathetic equality by the gifted and glorified beings on the stage. They addressed themselves, with a confidence nicely shaded with deference, to our well-known knowledge of the world; and we repaid the compliment with rapturous applause. And for my part I felt that it was all quite natural, inevitable, and, in a certain sense, touching.

There was an innocence, an unconsciousness in our vulgarity that redeemed and almost refined it. We knew no better and had no opportunity of knowing better. We did not delight in these imbecilities because of their imbecility, but because we quite genuinely thought them almost preternaturally clever. Our intellectual and moral attitude was incomparably more dignified than that of the stalls. We were not people of culture deliberately abjuring the use of our faculties ; we were not people of refinement elaborately and expensively seeking recreation in vulgarity ; we were not people to whom wealth had brought neither culture nor refinement, decking our commonness in broadcloth and jewels. We were simply good, honest, respectable, kindly lower-middle-class lads and lasses, enjoying an entertainment exactly adapted to our taste and comprehension, in child-like unconsciousness of its tawdry stupidity.

I do not mean that *The Gay Parisienne* is at all below the average of its class. On the contrary, it is comparatively inoffensive, and the comedians engaged in it are really clever. The action is incoherent beyond belief, and the lyrics, by Mr. George Dance, are not to be compared in point of workmanship with those of Mr. Adrian Ross and Mr. Harry Greenbank ; but Mr. Ivan Caryll's music is bright, and there is a certain gaiety and go about the whole entertainment which accounts for its popularity. Taking it, then, as

a fair specimen of its genus, what do we find to be the component parts, so to speak, of its attractiveness? First, I should say, its modernity; second, its obviousness; third, the directness of its appeal to many senses at once. Compared with the burlesques which it has ousted, how supply and sensitively modern it is! They, indeed, were lavish of "topical allusion," but it was only incidental, and they had to return, every now and then, to pick up some thread of old-world story, incomprehensibly transmogrified, which at best the majority of the audience neither knew nor cared anything about. I have said, and say again, that, so far as the lyrics are concerned, our musical farces are literary masterpieces in comparison with the Reece-Farnie burlesques; yet there can be no doubt that, for their full understanding, the burlesques presupposed a great deal more literary knowledge and quickness of perception on the part of the audience than musical farce dreams of demanding. Such a piece as *The Gay Parisienne*, far from resting on any substructure of mythology, history, or literature, seems rather to assume that the world was created the day before yesterday. Consider its charms as an animated fashion-plate! From the point of view of costume, the pink-limbed vestals of the "sacred lamp" were attractive only to a certain section of the masculine half of the audience; whereas the costumes of musical farce, while no less alluring to this mascu-

line contingent, are a source of unfailing interest and delight to the feminine half of the audience as well. My fair fellow-pittites were lost in admiration of Miss Ada Reeve's yellow frock with the black velvet sleeves, and will no doubt dream of it, as a radiant, unattainable ideal, until the next time they go to the theatre and see some other lovely being in still more exquisite and up-to-date array. The all-importance of this element of modernity appears in the fact that a successful musical farce, besides being embellished from night to night with fresh gags and encore verses, goes through a second and third edition, for all the world like an evening newspaper. It outlives the fashions of its date of production, and must be redressed and furbished up every fifty nights or so, on pain of becoming "a back number."

The obviousness which is the second essential in work of this class has already been illustrated in what I have said above. It must contain nothing, absolutely nothing, that costs a moment's thought. The range of admissible topics of satire is strictly limited, and you exceed it at your peril. Allusion must be confined to matters either of universal or of parochial notoriety; and the older and more rudimentary a joke may be, the more it will be appreciated. You can tell, in the pit, what witticisms really go home, by the fact of people repeating them to each other. In my immediate neighbourhood there were two young

women who, all through the evening, industriously echoed the things that most tickled their fancy. For instance, when Mr. Lionel Rignold, disguised in a kilt, said "I wish I had a blanket to put over my knees," each whispered to her companion, "He wishes he had a blanket to put over his knees," and went into fits of laughter. This is surely the acme—or, as Mr. Rignold might have said, the *ne plus ultra*—of obviousness in humour.

Finally, musical farce has a great advantage in the multiplicity of its forms of appeal. It ministers to every possible taste—except good taste. It includes prose and verse, music and dancing, sentiment and buffoonery; it combines light, colour, and spectacular display with the close reproduction of external phases of every-day life. Pedestrian and sordid realism, in a word, jostles with fantastic and flaunting idealism. It employs every faculty except the intelligence; and, so far as a large part of the audience is concerned, it may even be said to exercise, without overstraining, such intelligence as they possess. Therefore I believe it is a form to be reckoned with, a form that has come to stay. I even believe that, in spite of its slowness of development and its apparent retrogression, it contains the germs of better things. The evil lies, not in its existence, not in its popularity, but in the sheep-like rush of theatrical speculators into this form of enterprise, to the exclusion (we may almost say) of

all others. That, however, is a temporary evil which will doubtless correct itself—at the cost of the speculators themselves.

Mr. Bouchier's revival of *Donna Diana** at the Prince of Wales's last week was interesting in so far as it proved that, when the time comes for a revival of *The Taming of the Shrew*, we have in Miss Violet Vanbrugh a Katharine who may almost challenge comparison with Miss Rehan. If Miss Vanbrugh will cultivate her diction, and especially unlearn her contempt for the harmless, necessary comma, she will one day stand unrivalled in this line of parts. Perhaps—who knows?—Beatrice may follow Katharine. Of Mr. Bouchier let me only say that Petruchio would probably suit him better than the courtly and elegant Don Cæsar. The play, which comes (by way of Germany) from Spain and the seventeenth century, belongs in its present guise to the school of Sheridan Knowles. Westland Marston was a good deal less rampageous than the author of *The Hunchback*, but also, it must be admitted, less vigorous. If Moreto's comedy is as pretty as its name—*El Desden con el Desden*—I should like to know it. In the Anglo-Teutonic version, its rudimentary psychology is unredeemed by any charm of style.

* November 4 and 5 (afternoon).

· XLI.

THE HARMONIES OF "LITTLE EYOLF."*

Daily Chronicle, 23rd November.

"So they're going to do that horrid play *Little Eyolf*!" a lady said to me the other day. "I can't endure such things. It's almost as bad as *Jude the Obscure*—it couldn't be worse. What is the good of telling such stories?" I was not prepared with an answer; indeed I should have been similarly puzzled to say offhand what was "the good of" the *Ædipus* or off *Othello*. I "left the question in obscurity," as Dr. Johnson, to Boswell's regret, left the details of the future state; but I cordially agreed that *Little Eyolf* was an exceedingly painful play. As it reached me, act by act, about this time two years ago, I felt it the most harrowing piece of literature that had ever come in my way. I well remember the physical

* In an essay entitled "The Melody of 'The Master Builder,'" appended to the cheap edition of that play (Heinemann), I tried to show that its story was clear and consistent apart from its underlying meanings—its "melody" apart from its "harmonies." In this essay, I attempt the opposite task of throwing into relief the "harmonies" of a play whose "melody" is on all hands admitted to be clear.

tremor with which I read that appalling duologue between husband and wife in the second act. It seemed almost inconceivable that any audience could endure the remorseless rending of raw wounds of which the scene consists; and although the third act brought a certain measure of conciliation and consolation, I felt, and still feel, that to live through such a play is the reverse of an exhilarating experience. Yet I felt, and still feel, no less strongly, that *Little Eyolf* is not only one of the most poignant but one of the noblest and most beautiful things that Ibsen has ever done. As Eyolf himself says of the Rat-Wife's dog: "I think he has the horriblemst — countenance I ever saw. But he's lovely, lovely all the same." Where, then, does the loveliness come in? Partly, of course, in the consummate technical mastery of the first act, the thrilling poetry of the third act, and the tense dramatic vitality of the whole. "But," you object, "if the matter is horrible, how can 'technical mastery' and 'dramatic vitality' make it lovely?" You are simply re-phrasing the age-old enigma of tragic beauty—but let that pass. What I want to suggest is that beneath the marvellously-woven fabric of story and psychology we can discern a profoundly significant philosophical conception, which everywhere sustains and informs it. I have never been one of those who see in Ibsen a symbolist first and

a dramatist afterwards. If he is not a great playwright, he will certainly not go down to posterity as a great thinker. But when a materially and psychologically self-sufficient drama is irradiated to boot, as it were, with the light of a general idea, who can deny that our pleasure becomes subtler and more complex? It would be misleading to say that *Little Eyolf* sprang from such an idea; I do not believe that this creator of men and women ever starts from an abstract conception. He does not first compose his philosophic tune and then set his puppets dancing to it. No! The germ in his mind is dramatic, not ethical; it is only as the drama develops (though doubtless long before it gets upon paper) that its meanings dawn upon him; and he leaves them implicit and fragmentary, just like the symbolism of life itself, seldom formulated, never worked out with schematic precision. If, then, I try to unravel some of the underlying meanings of *Little Eyolf*, I must premise with emphasis that it is no set "doctrine," or "moral," or "message," that I profess to expound. I do not even assert that Ibsen deliberately put in the play all that I make out of it. He simply took a cutting from the tree of life, and, planting it in the rich soil of his imagination, let it ramify and burgeon as it would.

It was a just instinct that led the lady above quoted

to bracket *Little Eyolf* with *Jude the Obscure* in her black list. To say nothing of analogies of detail, there is this radical analogy, that they are both utterances of a profound pessimism, both indictments of Nature. But while Mr. Hardy's pessimism is plaintive and passive, Ibsen's is stoical and almost bracing. It is true that in this play he is no longer the mere "indignation-pessimist" whom Dr. Brandes quite justly recognised in his earlier works. His analysis has gone deeper into the heart of things, and he has put off the satirist and the iconoclast. But there is in his thought an incompressible energy of revolt. A pessimist in contemplation, he remains a meliorist in action. He is not, like Mr. Hardy, content to let the flag droop half-mast high; his protagonist still runs it up to the peak, and looks forward steadily to the "heavy day of work" before him. But although the note of the conclusion is resolute, almost serene, the play remains none the less an indictment of Nature, or at least of that egoism of passion which is one of her most potent subtleties. In this view, Allmers becomes a type of what we may roughly call the "free moral agent"; Eyolf, a type of humanity conceived as passive and suffering, thrust will-less into existence, with boundless aspirations and cruelly limited powers; Rita, a type of the egoistic instinct which is "a consuming fire"; and Asta, a type of the beneficent love which is possible only so long as it is exempt from

"the law of change." Allmers, then, is self-conscious egoism, egoism which can now and then break its chains, look in its own visage, realise and shrink from itself; while Rita, until she has passed through the awful crisis which forms the matter of the play, is unconscious, reckless, and ruthless egoism, exigent and jealous, "holding to its rights," and incapable even of rising into the secondary stage of maternal love. The offspring and the victim of these egoisms is Eyolf, "little wounded warrior," who longs to scale the heights and dive into the depths, but must remain for ever chained to the crutch of human infirmity. For years Allmers has been a restless and half-reluctant slave to Rita's imperious temperament. He has dreamed and theorised about "responsibility," and has kept Eyolf poring over his books, in the hope that, despite his misfortune, he may one day minister to parental vanity. Finally he breaks away from Rita, for the first time "in all these ten years," goes up "into the infinite solitudes," looks Death in the face, and returns shrinking from passion, yearning towards selfless love, and filled with a profound and remorseful pity for the lot of poor maimed humanity. He will "help Eyolf to bring his desires into harmony with what lies attainable before him." He will "create a conscious happiness in his mind." And here the drama opens.

Before the Rat-Wife enters, let me pause for a

moment to point out what seems to me a characteristic feature of Ibsen's art. Both in *The Master Builder* and in this play he adopts a method which may best be compared, I think, with that of Hawthorne. The story he tells is not really, or rather not inevitably, supernatural. Everything is explicable within the limits of nature; but supernatural agency is also vaguely suggested, and the reader's imagination is stimulated, without any absolute violence to his sense of reality. On the plane of everyday life, then, the Rat-Wife is a crazy and uncanny old woman, fabled by the peasants to be a were-wolf in her leisure moments, who goes about the country killing vermin. Coming across an impressionable child, she tells him a preposterous tale, adapted from the old "Pied Piper" legends, of her method of fascinating her victims. The child, whose imagination has long dwelt on this personage, is indeed fascinated by her, follows her down to the sea, and, watching her row away, turns dizzy, falls in, and is drowned. There is nothing impossible, nothing even improbable, in this. At the same time there cannot be the least doubt, I think, that in the poet's mind the Rat-Wife is the symbol of Death, of the "still, soft darkness" that is at once so fearful and so fascinating to humanity. This is clear not only in the text of her single scene, but in the fact that Allmers, in the last act, treats her and "his fellow-traveller" of that night among the moun-

tains, not precisely as identical, but as interchangeable, ideas. To tell the truth, I have even my own suspicions as to who is meant by "her sweetheart," whom she "lured" long ago, and who is now "down where all the rats are." This theory, as well as my interpretation of "Mopsëman," I shall for the present keep to myself; they may be purely fantastic, and are at best inessential. What is certain is that death carries off little Eyolf, and that, of all he was, only the crutch is left, mute witness to his hapless lot.

He is gone; there was so little to bind him to life that he made not even a moment's struggle against the allurements of the "long, sweet sleep." Then, for the first time, the depth of the egoism which had created and conditioned his little life, bursts upon his parents' horror-stricken gaze. Like accomplices in crime, they turn upon and accuse each other—"sorrow makes them wicked and hateful." Allmers, as the one whose eyes were already half-opened, is the first to carry war into the enemy's country; but Rita is not slow to retort, and presently they both have to admit that their recriminations are only a vain attempt to drown the voice of self-reproach. In a sort of fierce frenzy they tear away veil after veil from their souls, until they realise that Eyolf never existed at all, so to speak, for his own sake, but only for the sake of their passions and vanities. "Isn't it curious," says

Rita, summing up the matter, "that we should grieve like this over a little stranger boy?"

In blind self-absorption they have played with life and death; and now "the great open eyes" of the stranger boy will be for ever upon them. Allmers would fain take refuge in a love untainted by the egoism, and unexposed to the revulsions, of passion. But not only is Asta's pity for Rita too strong to let her countenance this desertion: she has discovered that her relation to Allmers is *not* "exempt from the law of change," and she "takes flight from him—and from herself." Meanwhile it appears that the agony which Allmers and Rita have endured in probing their wounds has been, as Halvard Solness would say, "salutary self-torture." The consuming fire of passion is now quenched, but "it has left an empty place within them," and they feel a common need "to fill it up with something that is a little like love." They come to remember that there are other children in the world on whom reckless instinct has thrust the gift of life—neglected children, stunted and maimed in mind if not in body. And now that her egoism is seared to the quick, the mother-instinct asserts itself in Rita. She will take these children to her—these children to whom her hand and her heart have hitherto been closed. They shall be outwardly in Eyolf's place, and perhaps in time they may fill the place in her heart that should have been Eyolf's.

Thus she will try to "make her peace with the great open eyes." For now, at last, she has divined the secret of the unwritten book on "Human Responsibility," and has realised that motherhood means—atonement.

So I read this terrible and beautiful work of art. This, I think, is *a* meaning inherent in it—not perhaps *the* meaning, and still less all the meanings. Indeed, its peculiar fascination for me, even among the works of this poet, lies in the fact that it seems to touch life at so many different points. And yet—to those who are going to see it at the Avenue Theatre—my final recommendation is that, while the curtain is up, they should clear their minds of all possible deductions, implications, and generalisations, and think only of the story, the character-development, the emotion—in a word, the drama.

XLII.

"THE HAVEN OF CONTENT" — "THE WHITE ELEPHANT" — "THE MANXMAN" — "LITTLE EYOLF."

25th November.

I HAVE a great deal of sympathy with Mr. Malcolm Watson, author of *The Haven of Content*, which was

produced last week at the Garrick Theatre.* His aims are excellent, and his methods are most conscientious. He writes just such plays as I should write myself, if I had not long ago abjured these frivolities. His dialogue is a good deal better than mine would be ; my construction (though I say it that shouldn't) would possibly be a little better than his. Practically, however, his plays differ from mine only in the fact of being written—a detail not wholly to their advantage. It is a case of "Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard——!" For there is no getting over the fact that our dramatic works—the works, that is to say, of the critical, ratiocinative Scotch intelligence—while they may be admirable in conception, are apt to come out dry and wooden in execution. They are eminently creditable alike to our head and to our heart, but they somehow reveal the absence of that trifling convolution of the cerebral matter where resides the indefinable something which we call the dramatic faculty. That "little more, and how much it is," has always been conspicuously lacking in the equipment of the North Briton. We are the salt of the earth, beyond a doubt, but not its dramatic salt. Whether it was John Knox who throttled the dramatist in us, I cannot tell ; I rather fancy he met his fate even earlier, and was knocked on the head by Robert

* November 17 (afternoon).

Bruce at Bannockburn. Be this as it may, the fact is clear that we have had divines, philosophers, generals, statesmen, romancers, poets, and prophets in plenty, but never a dramatist of any note. Our Shakespeare is the Rev. John Home, author of *Douglas*. T. W. Robertson was of Scotch descent, no doubt, but in his case the Caledonian strain had been liberally corrected. Among his contemporaries, the Scotch dramatists were—Andrew Halliday and H. B. Farnie. Nowadays we have Pinero, Jones, Grundy, Carton, Parker, Shaw—all hailing from the south or west. When Robert Louis Stevenson wanted to write plays, he took unto himself an English collaborator, Mr. W. E. Henley. Ha! I had forgotten—there is Mr. J. M. Barrie, a true-born Scot and a successful playwright. But it seems to me—does it not to you?—that if ever there was an exception that proved a rule, this is it. The only Scotch dramatist of the first rank that I ever heard of is—Henrik Ibsen; and I don't think it is his dramatic faculty that comes to him from Scotland.

“Whaur's your Wullie Shakespeare noo?” cried a patriot in the gallery when *Douglas* was produced in Edinburgh; but though Scotland was no doubt well represented in the Garrick audience (where is she not?) I did not hear any one inquire “Whaur's your Sydney Grundy noo?” *The Haven of Content*

leaves the balance of power unaltered in the theatrical world. There is plenty of ability in the play, plenty of thought and knowledge of the stage; the mischief is that it doesn't really exist, that it never for a moment gives us the sensation of life. The characters are sympathetic or unsympathetic abstractions, working out a plot; and the plot advances by measured stages to a foregone conclusion. If the people were alive, their conduct would raise one or two curious questions. Does Mr. Watson, not as a student of the stage, but as a man of the world, really think that there are any appreciable number of young gentlemen at the present moment devoting their lives to "the sacred duty of revenge" on business rivals who, even by unfair means, have undersold and ruined their respective fathers? For my part, I doubt it. We are a puny race; we bear grudges and "pay people out" when the chance comes in our way; but (unless, perhaps, when there is a woman in the case) we do not cherish elaborate vendettas. Life is too short, and its distractions too manifold. Lingered revenges belonged to the good old days of leisure. Then, again, if a young gentleman of the highest principles discovers that the father of the young lady he loves is a blackguard, does he (in Mr. Watson's experience) relieve his feelings by talking aggressive cynicism at the young lady in question, who is in no way concerned in her

father's iniquities? Again, I doubt it. This is Alfred-Evelynism, not human nature. I could understand it better if the young gentleman had been deeply attached to the young lady's father, so that the discovery brought with it a shock of disillusionment and horror. Then he would at least have the respectable precedent of Hamlet for treating his Ophelia with cruel discourtesy. But in this case there is no very grievous disillusionment in the matter. The hero makes himself gratuitously unpleasant to the heroine for no better reason than that there are still two acts to come—a good enough reason dramatically, but psychologically inconclusive. The third act, it is true, brings us an unexpected situation; but it is unexpected, not because it is new, but because the phase of character on which it depends has not been made clear to us. It is the oldest device in the world to extort from a woman a confession of her love by pretending that her lover is dead or in danger, though it has usually been applied to malignant, not benevolent, ends. The novelty in this case lies simply in Lord Henry Silcote's magnanimous employment of the trick; and to this moment I do not know whether he acts on a sudden good impulse, or whether his previous brutality to Clive Northcote is the result of a deep-laid scheme. All these questions arise because Mr. Watson begins with his situations, not with his

characters. His play is simply a plot with trimmings; but some of the trimmings are excellent. There are many bright, and some really thoughtful, lines in the dialogue, and the scenes are manipulated with a good deal of skill. Mr. Ernest Leicester was good as the hero; but Miss Haidee Wright did not seem to me a very happy selection for the heroine, though she improved as she went on. Mr. Beauchamp was sound and excellent as ever in the part of the unprincipled parent, and Mr. Julius Knight showed some ability as Lord Henry Silcote. Miss Granville played an amiably sarcastic woman of the world very pleasantly, but bewildered us by looking just thirty years too young for the part.

The White Elephant,* Mr. R. C. Carton's new play at the Comedy, is clever, but uneven, and on the whole disappointing. The first act, after the first ten minutes or so, is exceedingly bright—full of telling dialogue, and promising well for what is to follow. In the second act the intrigue soon becomes rather overcrowded with complications which do not spring necessarily, or even probably, from the original theme. For instance, I rack my brains to remember or conjecture why Lady Gwendoline Ogden does not simply go up to town with Emily, whom she is supposed to chaperon, instead of requiring the escort of Stacey Gillam. However,

* November 19—February 26.

we are willing enough to keep our sense of probability in abeyance, if only the playwright repays us by producing really ingenious and comic effects. This, at the end of the second act, Mr. Carton quite fails to do. With a curious neglect of economy—I mean of artistic economy, the other sort not being my affair—he brings on two new characters when the play is more than half over, with no sort of reason or excuse except just to complicate the situation. And, after all, the effect he obtains is one of mere rough-and-tumble. Never was there a situation so elaborately prepared and so promising as that of Ogden's return, which proved such a miserable flash in the pan. Here Mr. Carton's invention seems suddenly to have failed him. Instead of the original and ingenious tableau which we promise ourselves, we have Ogden, in the simplest and most obvious way, mistaken for a housebreaker, and the mistake instantly discovered—a mountain of preparation producing a mouse of effect. The beginning of the third act is very much better. Mr. Carton has had the good fortune to find in Mrs. Calvert the very woman for his delightful sketch of the caretaker, Mrs. Jauncey, with her imperturbable worldly-wisdom acquired in the best families. But here again the fun is let down, rather than worked up, by the introduction of a new character. It is true that Mrs. Cyrus N. Dowker is not, like Mr. Tweed and

Lord Bawcombe, unannounced and irrelevant; but after making her appearance at five minutes past eleven by the clock, Mrs. Dowker, in the piquant person of Miss Lottie Venne, has really nothing to do. The clearing up of the imbroglio, too, is curiously tame; and altogether the play shows a lack of sustained invention which surprises and disappoints us in Mr. Carton. The dialogue, however, is full of gaiety and point—quite rich enough in legitimate humour to dispense with one or two stupid and obvious double-meanings to which it is amazing that Mr. Carton should condescend. At the most flagrant of these I thought I heard some hisses in the gallery—but perhaps the wish was father to the thought. The character of Lady Gwendoline, though it suggests Miss Gertrude Kingston's part in *The Passport*, is very amusing, and Miss Compton's performance will be excellent when she takes it a little quicker. Mr. Hawtrey is at his best as Stacey Gillam, and Messrs. Kemble, Brookfield, Eric Lewis, and W. P. Hawtrey are all good. Miss Lottie Venne, as aforesaid, had scarcely anything to do, and her American is fearful and wonderful. Miss Nina Boucicault is very bright, and Miss Alice Mansfield makes the most of a conventional character.

The original version of *The Manxman*,* in which

* Every Monday, Tuesday, and Friday, from November 16 to December 11, and then at some matinées.

Mr. Wilson Barrett appeared at the Lyric Theatre last week, is an infinitely better play than the more ambitious treatment of the theme presented some time ago at the Shaftesbury. There can be no doubt that, for theatrical purposes, Pete is the effective character; so that the attempt to concentrate the interest upon Philip, or even to divide it between the two, is necessarily disastrous. No such attempt is made in the Lyric version: Philip is reduced to a shadow, and Pete has everything his own way. We are spared the nauseous Sulby Glen scene, and the absurd spectacular ending. Only the domestic passages, so to speak, remain, and the play becomes a not ineffective piece of sentimental idealism, distinctly superior to the ordinary run of melodramas. Mr. Wilson Barrett's Pete, too, is a really excellent piece of popular character-acting, robust, spirited, pathetic, thoroughly alive. Miss Maud Jeffries makes an impressive Kate, and the production, as a whole, if not severely artistic, is at least humane and creditable.

The production of Ibsen's *Little Eyolf*,* at the Avenue Theatre, is not one which I can pretend to criticise. The translation is my own; and, even if

* November 23-27 (afternoons). Evening performances, November 30—December 5, with Miss Achurch as Rita; December 8-19 with Mrs. Patrick Campbell as Rita. See p. 342.

it were not, the poem, the *Dichtung*, moves me so profoundly that I am totally unable to estimate its merits as a stage play. The one flaw that I find in it is the fantastic idea, so strongly insisted upon, of Allmers having called Asta "Eyolf," and pretended that she was not his half-sister but his brother. The significance of this invention, whether dramatic or symbolic, seems to me far-fetched and obscure. Otherwise, I rank the play beside, if not above, the very greatest of Ibsen's works, and am only doubtful whether its soul-searching be not too terrible for human endurance in the theatre. Even of the acting I cannot speak with full assurance, having seen too much of the process of study to have a clear impression of that which alone concerns criticism—to wit, the result. I am much mistaken, however, if the great intelligence and untiring labour which the actors, one and all, have bestowed upon their enormously difficult task, do not meet with cordial appreciation, even from those who think their enthusiasm misdirected. Rita finds in Miss Janet Achurch an artist subtly and sensitively responsive to all her shifting moods, and possessed of very remarkable powers of expression. Asta does not afford the fullest scope for the talent of Miss Elizabeth Robins, but delightfully illustrates one characteristic phase of it. Mrs. Patrick Campbell, as the Rat-Wife, makes the most admirable and artistic use of her extra-

ordinary personal advantages, and proves once for all the folly of measuring the importance and effectiveness of a part by its length or "lengths." Mr. Courtenay Thorpe plays the most trying part of Allmers with rare intelligence, force, and feeling; Mr. C. M. Lowne, as Borgheim, introduces a gust of fresh air into the somewhat oppressive atmosphere of the play; and Master Stewart Dawson, as the luckless Eyolf, once more proves himself the brightest and most natural of child-actors.

XLIII.

"THE TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA"—"THE KISS OF DELILAH"—"LITTLE EYOLF"—MR. BANCROFT'S READING.

2nd December.

WE Elizabethanised very learnedly and pleasantly over *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* on Saturday afternoon,* in the handsome hall of the Merchant Taylors' Company. My card of invitation stated that "the rooms of the Company would be open, and tea and coffee provided, from three o'clock;" but my archæological conscience would in nowise suffer me to partake of these anachronistic beverages. Had we

* November 27.

been bidden to cakes and ale, with an intimation (in the corner of the card) that ginger would be hot i' the mouth, then, i' fakens, I had blithely joined in the revels. Had we even been invited to drink a pipe of tobacco in order to create the true Elizabethan atmosphere, I should (at some personal inconvenience) have risen to the occasion. But tea or coffee would simply have untuned me and modernised my mood. I am surprised that Mr. Poel should countenance such an inaccuracy.

The play was recited with a good deal of spirit by a company of quite intelligent amateurs, of whom the Julia (Miss M. Dobie) was the best speaker, though the Valentine (Mr. Henry McCreer) possessed a remarkable voice, and the Proteus (Mr. Robert Castleton) was now and then far from bad. The Launce, too (Mr. Leonard Howard), showed a certain humour, but his dialect was suspiciously Victorian, and his dog did not "look the part" in the slightest degree. The truth is, however, that neither amateurs on a floor nor actors on a stage can make this work of Shakespeare's 'prentice hand really interesting or amusing. It contains two or three passages of genuine humour amid an infinite deal of excruciating word-torture; and one or two of the speeches rank with the divinest poetry Shakespeare ever wrote. Julia's speech, beginning "The current that with gentle murmur glides," is a thing of incomparable loveliness, despite a little

monotony in its end-stopped versification. To my thinking you may search all love poetry for an utterance more exquisitely simple and tender than this:

“Then let me go, and hinder not my course.
 I'll be as patient as a gentle stream,
 And make a pastime of each weary step,
 Till the last step have brought me to my love ;
 And there I'll rest, as after much turmoil
 A blessed soul doth in Elysium.”

But one or two passages of humour, and one or two bursts of poetry, are not sufficient to make a comedy; and in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* Shakespeare was simply playing with his material before settling down seriously to work. I cannot say that, for me, the Elizabethan (Society) staging shed any new light on the play. It is true that wherever Mr. William Poel sets his fantasy to work we may look for novel effects of stage-management. There was an idea, very much overdone, in Valentine's repeated attempts to escape from the Duke, when he is carrying the rope ladder to Sylvia's window; but I could not discover anything either Elizabethan or effective in his vociferous blubbing when he is found out. I have seen the hero of a Chinese drama conduct himself in like fashion; but why should Mr. Poel import his stage-management, as well as his refreshments, from China? The Gilbertian outlaws, got up in a gorgeous pantomime uniform, and

marching with flag and drum, were certainly entertaining; but since we know beyond all question that they were not so habited and marshalled in Shakespeare's time, the practical or artistic end of this masquerading I confess escapes me. The music, on the other hand, under the direction of Mr. Dolmetsch, struck me as not only interesting but beautiful. I wish I could write of it with understanding. The Elizabethan Stage Society promises a performance of *Twelfth Night* in the Middle Temple Hall on February 5. When this is over, I hope they will follow up the good beginning they made in *Doctor Faustus*, and leave Shakespeare alone for a time, while they give us costume recitals of some characteristic works of his contemporaries.

The three-act farcical drama, by "George Grant and James Lisle," performed at Drury Lane on Friday and Saturday of last week, under the title of *The Kiss of Delilah*,* is very much the sort of play Scribe might have written had he lived to the present day—that is, to the age of 105. Or let us say, remembering the marked degeneration of intellect which notoriously takes place in the spirit world, it is the sort of play he might dictate to a trance medium or rap out on a table. The methods are Scribe's, very clumsily applied; the conception of character and history comes from Scribe at second-

* November 27 and 28.

hand, through the medium of comic opera. Delilah is a tragedienne (a Rohan in disguise), who casts her spells upon Robespierre in order to save her lover, Talma, from the guillotine. Robespierre has a habit of soliloquising his plots in rooms which simply swarm with conveniences for eavesdropping; so that when he intends to send Talma with a letter to Fouquier-Tinville directing him to guillotine "the bearer" instantly, Delilah contrives that the subordinate villain shall be "the bearer," and thus saves Talma and takes revenge on her father's murderer at one stroke. In a subsequent scene, she plays a protracted game of thimble-rigging with Robespierre, Talma being the pea, and three bedrooms, opening off her salon, serving as the thimbles. But it would be futile to attempt any account of the preposterous ingenuities of a play which has by this time had its day and ceased to be. Its style is of a piece with its construction, and its character-drawing with its style. Mr. Hermann Vezin (sad to say) appeared as this Robespierre of opera-bouffe, and Miss Hilda Spong, in the part of Delilah, showed gallant self-devotion, insufficiently seconded by skill. I try to hold in check my northern prejudice against the intercalated R which is apparently the dearest birthright of the Englishman; but I think Miss Spong carries this grace of speech a little too far when she says to Talma, "François-I have found you."

The wonder of the past week, in the theatrical world, has been the popularity of *Little Eyolf* at the Avenue Theatre. That it has been a genuine success, I can vouch from personal knowledge; and there is every indication that the evening performances, to be given this week, will prove equally attractive. During the whole five matinées there has been practically not a seat to spare at the Avenue, and, after the first day, not a seat unpaid for. It is true—and this fact I commend to the notice of managers—that a considerable number of the stalls were subscribed in advance at slightly reduced prices. But this affected the stalls only, and the public flocked to all other parts of the house (gallery included) with equal eagerness. Yet the play is gloomy beyond all Ibsen's other works, and has only one act of incident and movement, followed by two acts of sheer analysis, poignant and pathetic, but the reverse of enlivening. What, then, went they to the Avenue to see? In the first place, no doubt, they went to see three of the ablest actresses in London playing their best—and the attraction was certainly not lessened by the fact that managerial wisdom had left two of these actresses idle for months and years. But from careful observation of the audience on two occasions, I am convinced that it was not only, or even mainly, a personal attraction that drew people to the theatre. They did not go to see this actress or that—they went

because they were sick to death of the vulgarity and triviality to which the stage has been given over for more than a year past, and yearned inexpressibly to hear reason and poetry once more, and to experience once more a profound and memorable emotion. I firmly believe that if *Little Eyolf* had been produced two years ago, when it was new, it would not have met with anything like so great success. It is because the intelligent playgoer has been languishing so long in the desert of tomfoolery that he hastens to this austere and harrowing poem, as though to an oasis of refreshment and reinvigoration. He says to the managers, as Rita says to Allmers (with the change of a single word): "You have made an empty place within me, and I must try to fill it up with something that is a little like—sense." That, I think, is the "lesson" of *Little Eyolf*.

It was a quaint coincidence which fixed Mr. Bancroft's reading of the *Christmas Carol* for the evening of the same day* on which *Little Eyolf* was produced. At the opposite poles of art, the two works both deal with the death of a lame child who cannot move without a crutch. Mr. Bancroft's rendering of Dickens's pathos was full of tact and sincerity; but in the vast area of the Queen's Hall his voice was at some points not sufficiently audible. In the comic passages, on the other hand—Bob

* November 23.

Cratchit's Christmas dinner and the party at Scrooge's Nephew's—every word was not only audible but instinct with appreciation of the author's humour. Mr. Bancroft's treatment of these scenes was altogether delightful, and was highly and justly relished by the audience.

XLIV.

"AS YOU LIKE IT."

9th December.

TAKE it all round, the St. James's revival of *As You Like It** is the best I remember to have seen. Most of the individual parts I have at one time or another seen better played, but I can remember no performance of greater average merit. Mr. Alexander has shown excellent tact in his general treatment of the play. He gives us a very complete text, with few rearrangements, and these quite permissible. There is no single instance of Dalyism in the whole production. The mounting might with advantage be simpler. There is a touch of unnecessary display about it here and there; the stage is overcrowded in some scenes, the Banished Duke's sylvan house-keeping is conducted on rather too sumptuous a scale, and the Masque of Hymen becomes an ela-

* December 2—March 20 (evening).

borate Drury Lane ballet instead of the simple piece of rustic mumming it surely ought to be. Still, there is no actual ill-taste in the mounting; my criticism aims rather at the principle of scenic lavishness than at Mr. Alexander's application of it.

Though there never was a play more replete with good acting parts than *As You Like It*, yet it may almost be called a one-part play, in the sense that everything depends upon Rosalind. For the sake of a good Rosalind, we could tolerate the veriest mediocrity in all the rest, whereas a bad Rosalind would ruin an otherwise brilliant performance. Miss Julia Neilson is a good Rosalind—not ideal, not enchanting, but more than satisfactory. Miss Neilson cannot get beyond the limits of her personality, but within these limits she displays tact, resource, and accomplishment of a very high order. There was perhaps a fitness beyond that which her advisers discerned, in the fact that this lady made her first appearance as Mr. Gilbert's Galatea. That her beauty is statuesque any one can see; but it is not a matter of physique alone—her art also is marmoreal. It presents a brilliant white surface, curiously chiselled, but pulseless, and with no iridescence either in its lights or its shadows. Thus her Rosalind does not thrill the imagination, suggesting depths of tenderness, nobility, and passion beyond what the plain lines of the part imply. This can be

done, this has been done ; Miss Neilson does not do it. Whatever there is in her rendering of the part lies on the surface, and is plainly, straightforwardly presented to eye and ear. But the eye and ear find ample and varied pleasure, and if the imagination is untouched, the intelligence can applaud all the more impartially. If this is the first time Miss Neilson has played the part, she has either been most admirably coached, or has seized upon its acting possibilities with amazing cleverness. After the first act, she scarcely misses an effect or misreads a line. She looks a little too manly in her doublet and hose, and her masculine bearing is almost too cleverly imitated from a model I seem to recognise ; but the variety and skilfulness of her comic expression took me, I confess, quite by surprise. And although positive distinction was not precisely the quality one would select for praise, there was a great deal of what may be called negative good taste in her reading of the part. Scarcely anything jarred or offended—one passage where Rosalind nudges Phebe, or rather shoulders her over towards Silvius, was the only thing that struck me as definitely amiss. The first act was less good than the rest, and this was a pity, because our understanding of, and sympathy with, the serious side of Rosalind's character depend mainly on this act. No doubt Miss Neilson's reading of it will improve as her natural nervousness wears off ; but I

doubt whether her art is capable of giving its full effect to such a line as the famous

“ Sir, you have wrestled well, and overthrown
More than your enemies.”

This is a speech which cannot be spoken, as it were, in a white light ; it demands a tremulous iridescence which is scarcely within Miss Neilson's range. One suggestion by the way: in that delightful scene where Phebe, Orlando, and Rosalind speak the responses to the lover's creed as formulated by Silvius, ought not Rosalind to steal a fleeting glance at Orlando at the words “ And I for—” looking away again as she completes the phrase with “—no woman”? Orlando is not looking at her, so that she could easily do this without self-revelation ; and it seems at once the effective and the merely natural thing to do.

Mr. George Alexander, one of the best speakers on the English stage, makes an excellent Orlando, playing with spirit and grace, humour and feeling. I did not think the wrestling-match very judiciously arranged. Correct it no doubt is according to one set of rules, but I think another style might with advantage have been chosen. Mr. Vernon as Jaques speaks with excellent point and discretion. His delivery of the Seven Ages speech is memorably good, the more so as he eschews the common vulgariſm of mimicking the characters he describes. Mr. Fernandez is a

sound and satisfactory Banished Duke, and Mr. Henry Loraine is, next to that perfect actor of his class "old Chippendale," the best Adam I can remember. Among the younger actors, Mr. Esmond, who plays the important part of Touchstone, naturally demands the first place. His performance is distinctly modern, and quite unaffected by tradition. It lacks unction, it is dry as a remainder biscuit, but it is thoughtful, intelligent, amusing. Instead of being stolidly and sententiously humorous, Mr. Esmond is impish and Mephistophelean. He is more distinctly half-witted, it seems to me, than any other Touchstone I have seen. As I watched him, I put him down in my mind as a rococo Touchstone. In looking back, to tell the truth, I don't quite know how the epithet came to suggest itself; but I state the impression for what it is worth. Mr. H. B. Irving was picturesque as Oliver, and spoke very well the long speech describing the adventure with the lioness; though, by an unfortunate emphasis, he made it appear as if Orlando "*threw* his eye aside" in obedience to the Scriptural injunction for dealing with an offending optic. It is surely an error of stage-management, by the way, to make Oliver in the first scene cry, "Let me go, I say," long after Orlando has loosed his grip of him, and when no one is hindering him from going wherever he pleases. Mr. C. Aubrey Smith made a striking figure of the

usurping Duke; Mr. Vincent Sternroyd was a capital Le Beau; and Mr. George P. Hawtreys was a quite delightful William. Mr. Arthur Royston played with feeling as Silvius, and Mr. W. H. Day was a good Corin, though he fell into the *strange mistake* of speaking "I earn that I eat, get that I wear" without any emphasis on the "that." Is it possible Mr. Day does not realise that the "that" is equivalent to "that which"? The phrase is utterly meaningless when the "that" is slurred. There is all the difference in the world between "I earn *that* I eat" and (for instance) "I eat th't I may live." The two "thats" are different parts of speech and are sounded quite differently. This is such an elementary matter that I must apologise for expounding it; but surely the first requisite of a Shakespearian actor is that he should understand the language of Shakespeare. Miss Fay Davis made a very charming Celia, especially after the first act, in which she was a little too eagerly arch and vivacious. This was no doubt an effect of nervousness; but in these days of long runs the effects of temporary causes are apt to perpetuate themselves even when the causes have ceased to operate, unless they be deliberately checked. Miss Dorothea Baird was a wistful and passionate Phebe, and Miss Kate Phillips a good and unexaggerated Audrey. Miss Julie F. Opp made a very effective figure of Hymen in the Masque (since when has Hymen become a

goddess?), but she, too, put rather too much dash and energy into her performance. A calmer dignity would have been more to the purpose. Of the musical portion of the production I am not competent to speak. It seemed to me that Mr. Bertram Wallis as Amiens sang very pleasantly, and that the choruses went well. It is surely a mistake to bring in a chorus behind the scenes before Rosalind, Celia, and Corin have left the stage after their first scene in the forest. It destroys the illusion, for we feel it incredible that the new-comers should take no notice of it and make no inquiry as to who the singers may be. I am not an admirer of the tradition which gives to Rosalind the Cuckoo Song from *Love's Labour's Lost*, but, since Miss Neilson is a practised singer, I suppose the temptation was irresistible.

XLV.

"WOMAN'S WORLD"—"THE CIRCUS GIRL"—
"SWEET NANCY."

16th December.

THERE is distinct cleverness in Mr. J. P. Hurst's comedy, *Woman's World*, produced at the Court Theatre one afternoon last week.* The theme is old, but perennially attractive. It is practically that of

* December 8.

Much Ado about Nothing, and *The Taming of the Shrew*, and *Donna Diana*, and Heaven knows how many plays besides, ancient and modern. It always tickles our masculine vanity to see a woman who boasts herself inaccessible to passion constrained to doff her Amazonian armour and pass under the yoke of sex; and for some obscure reason—let us call it obscure, at any rate—the spectacle is equally pleasing to the feminine portion of the audience as well. Brünnhilde sinking “liebestrunken” into the arms of Siegfried, a Valkyrie no more, but only a woman, is, in one guise or another, the most popular heroine in dramatic literature. Mr. Hurst has chosen to deal with a variation on the theme, making not Siegfried but Hagen—a hypocrite and traitor—the awakener of his Valkyrie. Even this variation we have seen before—notably, I think, in one of Mr. Gilbert’s plays—but Mr. Hurst handles it originally and ably. If he were not habitually careless, or rather defiant, of the reasonable requirements of modern technique, his play might have more than a matinée success. From the wantonness with which he outrages common-sense in the matter of soliloquies, asides, overhearings, and so forth, I can only conclude that he thinks technical plausibility a symptom of Ibsenism, and wishes to assert his independence. In this he certainly succeeds. His villain, while actually embracing the heroine, must needs look over her

shoulder and remark, "How damned monotonous this is growing!" And most of his asides are not mere interjections, but little lectures. Here are two further specimens: "Flirtation in the witness-box, with a cross-examining Q.C., would be a joke to this;" and again, "Bother her sentimentality! What an infernal mess she has made of my scheme, confound her!" Both of these are spoken with the lady not three yards off, sedulously pretending to be stone deaf. And the beauty of it is that the lectures are quite unnecessary, and serve no purpose whatever. The audience must be dull indeed which does not perceive without their aid that the gentleman is embarrassed by the lady's interrogatories, and that her sentimentality has upset his plans. Then, again, Mr. Hurst's characters always choose the most public places to say and do the most compromising things; and of course the wrong person always pops in just at the right moment. If people acted in reality as recklessly as they do in Mr. Hurst's imagination, life would be one long series of picture-posters, and we should have so much drama day by day that we should never go to the theatre in search of it. Asides and soliloquies apart, Mr. Hurst's dialogue is far from bad, though he is too fond of hackneyed allusions—Mahomet's coffin, Mahomet and the mountain, etc.—and too apt to let some jingling banality pass for wit. Finally, if the piece should ever be

reproduced, will not Mr. Hurst modify his heroine's instant readiness to "wheedle and wheedle" a lover whom she loathes and despises, in order to get money out of him for the lover she loves? This is an exceedingly unamiable, not to say unprincipled, trait in Miss Constance Glyn, and at once reduces her to the level of the scoundrel who is befooling her. The play was adequately though not brilliantly acted by Miss Esmé Beringer, Miss Jessie Bateman, Mr. George Hippisley, Mr. Joseph Carne, Mr. Ivan Watson, and Mr. Frederick Volpé.

The new musical play at the Gaiety, *The Circus Girl*,* is not perhaps the cleverest, but certainly one of the brightest and most entertaining, of its kind. Six gentlemen are announced as its authors and composers—Messrs. James T. Tanner, W. Palings, Harry Greenbank, Adrian Ross, Ivan Caryll, and Lionel Monckton—but for once the proverb about the cooks and the broth does not hold good. The plot is of no account, what little idea there is in it being borrowed from a German play named *Eine tolle Nacht*, which would appear, in its turn, to have been inspired by Labiche in one of his wildest humours. The songs, on the other hand, are very brightly rhymed, and the music, though characterless, is gay and appropriate enough. The real strength of the production, however, lies in its lavish mounting

* December 5—still running.

and in the ability of the comedians engaged. Two couples—Mr. Seymour Hicks and Miss Ellaline Terriss, Mr. Edmund Payne and Miss Katie Seymour—hold the stage alternately, and are full of comic spirit and dexterity. Miss Terriss lends a certain charm to whatever she does, even to the extravagances of musical farce; and, though her comrades are not exactly charming, they are always alert and generally amusing. The other performers—Mr. Arthur Williams, Mr. Harry Monkhouse, Miss Ethel Haydon, Miss Connie Ediss, etc.—are good in their way; but the weight of the piece rests on the shoulders of the quartette above mentioned. Very animated and amusing is the circus scene of the second act, which is staged with admirable ingenuity; and the concluding scene, the Artists' Ball, is probably the most gorgeous that has ever been presented in this class of play. The production is free from aggressive vulgarity, and is enormously relished by the audience.

On Thursday last Miss Annie Hughes revived at the Criterion, for a single afternoon,* Mr. Robert Buchanan's dramatisation of Miss Rhoda Broughton's *Nancy*. When first produced at the Royalty, this clever and really human little play was less successful, I fancy, than it deserved to be. It certainly delighted

* December 10. Revived at Court Theatre, February 8—still running.

the audience at the Criterion, where it was acted with excellent spirit. Miss Hughes seems born for the title-part, in which she displays admirable humour, vivacity, and tenderness. Her performance is a genuine and most sympathetic character-creation. Mr. Edmund Maurice was good as Sir Roger Tempest, and the Gray children were capitably played by Mr. Martin Harvey, Mr. Kenneth Douglas, and Miss Beatrice Ferrars.

At the Avenue Theatre, Mrs. Patrick Campbell has replaced Miss Achurch as Rita in *Little Eyolf*.^{*} Mrs. Campbell's performance, undertaken on very short notice, was marred on the opening night by insufficient preparation, but was nevertheless adroit, interesting, and full of the personal charm which never deserts this actress. By this time, no doubt, she has taken fuller and firmer possession of the part.

XLVI.

"KING RICHARD THE THIRD." †

23rd December.

IN Mr. Traill's *New Lucian* there is an ingenious dialogue upon acting, suggested by a comparison

* See note, p. 322.

† Performed only once (December 19), Sir Henry Irving being disabled by an accident. Reproduced February 27—still running.

between the portraits of Garrick and Mr. (now Sir Henry) Irving. One of the interlocutors (George Henry Lewes, I think) points out that whereas Garrick's face is in no way remarkable except for its alertness and vivacity of expression, Sir Henry Irving's face is one in ten thousand—a visage which, once seen, can never be forgotten. Hence the moral is drawn that a strongly marked physiognomy, or indeed a potent personality of any sort, is of questionable advantage to an actor. It may serve him in some parts, but it necessarily tends to limit his range, and induce monotony in his effects. Perfect plasticity (according to this view) should be the actor's ideal. His body should be a mere lump of clay for his imagination to model at will. He should be all muscle, and trained muscle, with the least possible trace of osseous substructure. If his skeleton asserts itself at all, it will always be getting in his way. We have here the logical formula of the perfect actor, deduced from the idea of acting. The only trouble is that physiology defies logic, and that even an approximation to the ideal, such as we find, no doubt, in the case of Garrick, is the very rarest thing in the world. Very few, even of the greatest actors, have been great in plasticity. Almost all tragedians, at any rate, have made their strong personality the basis of their art, and have found their successes in self-accentuation rather than in self-suppression. This

is of necessity Sir Henry Irving's method ; for a more marked and less pliant personality than his it would be difficult to discover, on or off the stage. His antecedent physical fitness for a character has almost always been the measure of his success in it. I can think of only one notable exception to this rule—his Don Quixote.* There are three character-types to which his physiognomy readily lends itself—the contemplative-ascetic, the melancholy-aristocratic, and the grotesquely diabolic. He shines with a peculiar fitness in such parts as Becket,† Charles I., and Louis XI. ; or, if one may so generalise the classes, in the Seraph, the Hidalgo, and the Gargoyle. Now there is a plentiful lack of the Seraph in Richard III. ; and though the Hidalgo peeps out now and then—notably in the lines which Sir Henry Irving delivers with memorable greatness :

“ But I was born so high,
Our aery buildeth in the cedar's top,
And dallies with the wind, and scorns the sun ”—

yet he is so overlaid with physical and mental deformity that it would certainly be the extreme of paradox to embody him on the lines of Charles I. Richard is relegated, then, to the third class, the grotesquely diabolic; and Sir Henry Irving throws

* *Theatrical World of 1895*, p. 137.

† *Theatrical World of 1893*, p. 46.

himself with a will into the Gargoyle mode of his personality. Of course there was nothing else to be done: the Richard of Shakespeare and of tradition is a fiend incarnate. But, in Sir Henry Irving's case, there is this danger about characters of the diabolic type, that they come a little too seductively easy to him. Once get him into the Gargoyle frame of mind, and he is apt to rely too exclusively on sheer grotesqueness of expression. It was this absence of intellectual or even impersonative effort that made his Mephistopheles so cheap and pantomimic. In Richard he is saved, to some extent, by the fact that he is speaking the language of Shakespeare, not of Mr. Wills, and that the fiend he is impersonating is, after all, a Plantagenet. This he never forgets; there is nothing vulgar about his performance. But its fiendishness is too monotonous and too external. The Richard of Shakespeare is diabolical in plausibility as well as in irony and ferocity. He "clothes his naked villany" and "seems a saint when most he plays the devil." Now there is nothing in the least plausible about Sir Henry Irving's Gloucester. It is by magnetic volition that he carries his points, never by anything that can be called serious hypocrisy. He wins Lady Anne by a sort of hideous rattlesnake fascination—almost, one may say, by the cynical insincerity of his blandishments. Now snake-like fascination does rightly enter into the scene, but it is only one ingredient in the

hell-brew that turns the poor lady's head. There is every reason to believe that the historic Richard (if he was a hunchback at all) had, or could assume, a certain beauty of feature and expression; and nothing in Shakespeare's portraiture of him excludes this possibility. Not even in the scene with Lady Anne, however, does Sir Henry Irving bring it into play for a moment. He is the "bottled spider" throughout, "the hunchback toad"—or rather a sort of cuttle-fish enfolding her in his clammy tentacles. As an instance of the total lack of sincerity in his pleadings, take his treatment of this passage:

ANNE : Ill rest betide the chamber where thou liest !

GLOUCESTER : So will it, Madam, till I lie with you.

ANNE : I hope so.

GLOUCESTER : I know so.

The last three words Sir Henry Irving speaks with a humorous leer at the audience, never attempting to make them carry, as it were, and impress Lady Anne. If she hears them at all (he treats them almost as an aside) she cannot fail to realise that he is laughing in his sleeve at her. And this is typical. His hypocrisy is throughout a mere farce which could impose on no one. In the scene where "his Grace stands 'twixt two clergymen," for example, his sanctimony is simply a little joke between him and the audience, and he keeps on metaphorically nudging us

lest we should fail to see the point. Thus he entirely misses, or at most caricatures, what might be the most appalling side of Richard's villainy—his talent for dissimulation. So consistently and unintermit-
tently does he play the Gargoyle, that when Hastings says

"I think there's never a man in Christendom
Can lesser hide his love or hate than he;
For by his face straight shall you know his heart,"

the remark seems impossibly purblind even for such a noodle; though the last line, taken by itself, is all too literally true.

Sir Henry Irving delighted my syllabically punctilious ear by the care with which (apart from one or two mere slips of the tongue) he spoke the very words of Shakespeare's lines; or, if he altered anything, it was to the benefit, not the detriment, of the verse. He actually treated "Woodville" as a trisyllable ("Wood-e-ville") in the line "Anthony Woodville her brother there"; and, by omitting the words italicised, he made good metre of the two following lines:

"We say that Shore's wife hath a *pretty foot*,
A cherry lip, a bonny eye, a passing pleasing tongue."

But oh! his pauses! Not only do they protract the play beyond all reason, but they take every atom of

life and impetus out of it. It is characteristic that every "reading" which involves a pause at once commands Sir Henry Irving's approval. When Richard makes up his mind to woo Lady Anne, instead of saying straightforwardly, "What though I killed her husband and her father?" Sir Henry must needs read the line as though he were answering some unseen interlocutor, "What!—though I killed her husband and her father!" for no conceivable reason except to secure a breathing-space after the "What!" Here, however, there is an idea, far-fetched though it be; the fatal pauses are those which have no reason or excuse except simply the slowness of the actor's method. For my part (to my sorrow be it said), I find that they take all dramatic interest out of his Richard, and indeed out of most of his Shakespearian characters. It may be that my mind is reprehensibly volatile, but I simply cannot keep my attention fixed while Sir Henry Irving is meditating his next syllable. My thoughts fly off and survey mankind from China to Peru, returning with a start to the matter in hand when the actor at last makes up his mind to go on. In the line "There let him sink, and be—the sea—on him," I actually went through a whole day-dream, following up a long train of associations, during the first pause, and was occupied during the second in wondering at the distance my thoughts had managed to wander.

But the first condition of dramatic effect is that our attention shall be enchained. The actor who fails to do so may interest and even delight us critically, but he cannot lift us out of ourselves and whirl us away on the tempest of his passion.

Richard so dominates the play as to leave little room for any one else. Mr. Cooper Cliffe as Clarence, Mr. Frank Cooper as Richmond, and Mr. Macklin as Buckingham, were all passable, but exceedingly prosaic and undistinguished. Mr. Gordon Craig was effective as Edward IV., and Messrs. Norman Forbes and W. Farren, jun., made a pair of picturesque murderers. Miss Geneviève Ward spoke the lines of Queen Margaret with ample spirit, but was too much a mortal among mortals to give this uncanny part its full effect. There should be something weird, supernatural, spectral, about the gaunt figure flitting bodeful and almost (as it seems) impalpable through the halls of her enemies. Miss Maud Milton was good as Queen Elizabeth, but Miss Mary Rorke seemed about half a century too young for the Duchess of York. Miss Julia Arthur, despite some uncertainty of voice, produced a pleasant effect as Lady Anne, but was so preposterously and cumbrously overdressed that it was impossible really to see or judge of her acting. The revival, as a whole, is overdressed and over-armoured. It would be much more living and impressive if the characters had not one

and all the air of highly-coloured fashion-plates of the period. Richard himself, while he talks of "entertaining tailors to study fashion to adorn his body," has already the price of half a county on his back.

The text used is unadulterated Shakespeare, Colley Cibber having been banished from the Lyceum (as he had been from Sadler's Wells so long ago as 1845) when first Mr. Irving played the part. Large retrenchments are of course inevitable; but I think they might have been more judiciously made. Chronology is even more hopelessly muddled in the stage version than in the original: there is an inextricable tangle over the executions at Pomfret and the conveyance of the young king from Ludlow. The idea of closing the second act with the line "Chop off his head, man; somewhat we will do" is a most unhappy one, merely bewildering the audience. In such work as this, it is impossible to close an important passage on a single staccato note; we instinctively demand a full chord. If I were arranging *Richard III.* for the stage, I should certainly make bold to cut the whole of Richard's proposal to Queen Elizabeth for the hand of her daughter. It is simply inconceivable that Shakespeare should have intended both this scene and the Lady Anne scene to be acted in the same performance. May it not be, I wonder, that the poet found the Elizabeth scene (which has

a good deal of historical foundation) ready-made in some older play, by Marlowe or another, and at first contented himself simply with touching it up? Then, finding it popular on the stage, may he not have developed the idea, and supplanted the old scene with a new and much stronger one of his own invention, in which the wooing is not done by proxy but addressed straight to the lady herself? There is not the slightest historical foundation for the Lady Anne scene, and it has quite the air of an interpolation, making the first act disproportionately long. It may very well have been suggested by the clumsier and more archaic scene with Elizabeth; but it seems incredible that the man who had once written the stronger scene should deliberately, and in the same play, go and water it down into the weaker. Thus the episodes are, I suggest, alternative; either may be played, but not both; and there cannot be the least doubt as to which is better worth playing. I do not know whether this suggestion has been made before, and I have not looked closely into the evidence on the point; but some such theory seems to me inevitable, to account for the co-existence of two such passages in the same play.

XLVII.

"THE PILGRIM'S PROGRESS" — "BLACK EYED SUSAN" — "THE EIDER-DOWN QUILT" — "ALADDIN."

30th December.

IT was with something like eagerness that I looked forward to the dramatisation of *The Pilgrim's Progress* at the Olympic.* No one is more sensible than I of the gaps, not to say chasms, in my education; and here was Mr. G. G. Collingham, in the kindest way in the world, promising, as it seemed, to fill one of them up for me. I had never been able to read *The Pilgrim's Progress*; perhaps, after having it "sub-jected to my faithful eyes" in dramatic form, I might begin to appreciate it, or at least to know something about it. Larochefoucauld says (or, if he does not, he ought to) that men are more vain of their ignorance than of their knowledge. But that is really not my case with regard to Bunyan. I deplore the mental twist, or accident of education, which disables me from relishing him. I even make periodical efforts to conquer *The Pilgrim's Progress*, and have sometimes struggled

* December 24—January 4. Revived for one week, March 1—6.

on as far as the House Beautiful, but only to collapse ingloriously in the Valley of Humiliation. Pitying friends have suggested that I was not caught young enough by the charm of the story; but this theory hardly squares with the facts. Macaulay, it is true, Macaulayises wildly in saying that "In every nursery *The Pilgrim's Progress* is a greater favourite than *Jack the Giant-Killer*." Bunyan was not admitted into my nursery at all; he probably did not harmonise with the shade of theology there prevailing. But I was scarcely out of the nursery when I devoted one of my infrequent pennies to the purchase of a wretchedly-printed copy of *The Pilgrim's Progress*, whose terra-cotta covers are still vivid in my mind's eye. I attacked it with almost feverish anticipation; but not even the charm of doing something surreptitious and a trifle wicked could carry me much beyond the terra-cotta cover. Later efforts have been equally unavailing. Nowadays, indeed, I am not insensible to the homespun strength of Bunyan's style; it is the merit of his invention that escapes me. Every now and then I read, or hear, delightful quotations from *The Pilgrim's Progress*, and am fired to gird up my loins afresh and set forth from the City of Destruction. But as soon as I open the book the delightful passages seem somehow to have vanished. There are several other great works

whose beauties similarly elude me when I go to the fountain-head for them. No doubt every one has the same experience, and could name classics which have always kept him at arm's length, and refused to admit him into their intimacy. We cannot all love everything; but I sincerely regret that *The Pilgrim's Progress* should rank, for me, with "draughtboards bound and lettered on the back and the histories of Flavius Josephus, that learned Jew."

On Christmas Eve, then, I presented myself at the Olympic in the childlike hope that Mr. G. G. Collingham would take me by the hand and lead me along the path I had so often desired to tread. The official pamphlet-preface to the "Mystery Play" was not reassuring, with its sham erudition couched in showman's English—its chatter about "Theophylact the Patriarch," and its explanation that "Bunyan's immortal allegory" is "set in a hard, dry atmosphere of thought, which, though forcible and stern, is oblivious to much that exists in Nature and Life, and lacks the tender grace and charm of writers to whom the world seemed less rugged and gloomy than it did to the persecuted tinker of Bedford." But a play does not stand or fall by the "Archæological Fly-Leaves" (as Charles Kean used to call them) issued by a "scholarly" management. Shakespeare

was not to blame for Mr. Kean's vapourings about Xiphilin and the Eyrbyggja Saga; and Mr. Collingham might perhaps (I thought) be equally guiltless of such sad stuff as this:—"It is hoped that presenting ideas cherished by all, and enshrined with our deepest beliefs, set in a play enhanced by every attraction that music, song, dance, and a series of beautiful stage pictures can supply, this piece may please not only the regular play-goer but that very large section of the public who, keenly appreciative of romance and artistic beauty, are waiting to patronise theatres that endeavour to respond to their ideals." Alas! before the curtain had been up ten minutes, it was evident that this florid fly-leaf, if not actually written by the author, drew its inspiration direct from him. The play is a perfectly futile and unimaginative allegorisation of what the fly-leaf delightfully describes as "the semi-sacred subject of The Soul's Conflict with Evil." A good many of the names are borrowed from Bunyan; there is a scene called Vanity Fair ("enhanced by the attraction" of a ballet), and another called the Dungeon of Giant Despair; we are even treated to a feeble combat between a feminine Christian and an Adelphi Apollyon; but otherwise the piece has scarcely anything to do with "the immortal allegory." Christian is a prince of fairyland; he has a lady-

love, high Speranza; the Archangel Raphael officiates as his good genius, in opposition to his evil genius, Apollyon; he falls without a struggle into the toils of an enchantress named Melusina, and falls out of them again with equal ease—in short, he goes through a series of disconnected scenes in which great care is taken, it would appear, to avoid anything like dramatic interest or effect. It may be essential to the form here attempted that the scenes should have no structural interdependence; but there is no reason why each should not make a little drama in itself. This does not seem to have occurred to Mr. Collingham, who rather goes out of his way to do everything as undramatically as possible. The word “drama,” indeed, appears to have no meaning for him.

Puerile theology in a setting of tawdry spectacle—that is the sum-total of *The Pilgrim's Progress*. Though the fly-leaf declares that “the dialogue is not in verse but in rhythmical prose,” the greater part of it is in fairly correct blank-verse, flat and flaccid enough, but deliberately metrical through long, unbroken sequences. A good many of the dresses and some of the scenes are copied from early Florentine pictures, the result being crude but curious, and in some cases effective. The Vanity Fair scene, for example, is a clever bit of painting. Such a play affords no opportunities for acting, so I shall merely

record that Miss Grace Hawthorne appeared as Christian, Miss Esmé Beringer as Speranza, Miss Vera Beringer as Florimonde (one of the sirens of *Vanity Fair*), and Miss Florence Hamer as Melusina. Miss Laura Johnson contrived to put some vigour into her presentation of "Malignity"; Mr. Courtenay Thorpe, as Raphael, bore up gallantly against a grotesque costume, and spoke his lines well; and it was not Mr. Abingdon's fault that he could make of Apollyon nothing more than a pantomimic demon. For the benefit of any of my readers who may prefer this "semi-sacred" pantomime to the secular productions of the season, let me note that the telegraphic address of the Anglo-American Theatrical Syndicate, Limited, is "Apollyon, London."

That dear old piece of nautical nonsense Jerrold's *Black Eyed Susan* has been revived at the Adelphi* with a scenic completeness undreamt of by Elliston and T. P. Cooke, but otherwise in its pristine simplicity, a few "cuts" excepted. The thing was worth doing, and it is thoroughly well done. He is a degenerate Briton, an unworthy compatriot of Nelson and Captain Marryat, who refuses to laugh at the first act, and to feel in the second act (to quote the drama itself) "a tear standing in either eye, like a marine at each gangway." Mr. Terriss makes a capital William, and dances the hornpipe "like a

* December 23—still running.

hangel." Miss Millward is an agreeable and pathetic Susan; and the whole performance goes with admirable conviction and spirit. The costumes alone are worth all the money.

A three-act farce, by Mr. Tom S. Wotton, entitled *The Eider-Down Quilt*,* produced last week at Terry's Theatre, does not stand quite on the lowest level of "farcical comedy," but comes perilously near it. In only one short passage is it actually offensive, but its postulates are absurd, and its developments are neither ingenious nor plausible. The inexhaustible energy of Miss Fanny Brough infused a certain semblance of life into the action, and, whenever the author gave him a chance, Mr. De Lange was remarkably clever in the character of an Italian waiter masquerading as a Prince. Mr. Arthur Playfair—the manager for the time being—was intermittently amusing in a light-comedy part. The entertainment opened with *In Mary's Cottage*, a prettily-written one-act love-story, by "Charles Beckwith," in which Miss Winifred Fraser acted with simplicity and feeling.

Undiminished splendour, with increased grace and refinement—that is the impression one brings away from Mr. Oscar Barrett's first Drury Lane pantomime, *Aladdin*.† One could still wish for a little more clearness and proportion in the telling of the story.

* December 21—March 27.

† December 26—March 27.

It does not really begin until the evening is half over, and some of its most effective incidents are huddled together at the very close. In these matters we may hope for improvement under Mr. Barrett's reign. Otherwise there is nothing to object to in the pantomime, and much to admire. The scenery is excellent; there is beauty as well as lavish display in the costumes; and the dances (arranged by Madame Katti Lanner) are intricate and effective. Miss Ada Blanche plays Aladdin with spirit and with as much refinement as is possible in a "principal boy"; while Miss Decima Moore, in a series of really exquisite dresses, makes a charming Princess Badroulbadoor. The music-hall element is reduced in quantity and improved in quality. For my part, I actually enjoyed Mr. Dan Ileno's Widow Twankay, which contains touches of true comedy; and even Mr. Herbert Campbell, as Abanazar, was now and then genuinely funny. It was a happy idea to engage Paul Cinquevalli for the Slave of the Lamp—his juggling is not only marvellous in itself, but (in two scenes at any rate) appropriate to the situation, and therefore dramatically effective. The Grigolati Aërial Troupe perform their graceful acts of "levitation"; the Brothers Griffiths do some capital comic business; and there is a Dragon in the Cavern Scene beside which the Bayreuth Fafnir seems a "worm" indeed. Altogether, the pantomime contains plenty of enter-

Berenis, Miss Maud Hoffman; *Dacia*, Miss Daisy Belmore; *Poppea*, Miss Grace Warner; *Ancaria*, Miss Alida Cortelyon; *Daones*, Miss Laura Johnson; *Julia*, Miss Cecilia Wilman; *Cyrene*, Miss Gertie Boswell; *Edonie*, Miss Alice Gambier; *Zona*, Miss Bessie Elma; *Catia*, Miss M. Shattinger; *Mytelene*, Miss Rose Pendennis; *Favius*, Mr. Alfred Brydone; *Titus*, Mr. Stafford Smith; *Melos*, Mr. Percy Foster; *Stephanus*, Miss Haidee Wright; *Mercia*, Miss Maud Jeffries. Still running.

7. THE PRISONER OF ZENDA: Romantic Play in a Prologue and Four Acts; adapted from Anthony Hope's story of the same name, by Edward Rose. **St. James's.** Cast—Characters in the Prologue: *Prince Rudolf*, Mr. George Alexander; *Duke Wolfgang*, Mr. Herbert Waring; *Gilbert, Earl of Rassendyll*, Mr. Charles Glenney; *Horace Glynn*, Mr. Vincent Sternroyd; *Jeffreys*, Mr. Henry Boyce; *Giffen*, Mr. F. Featherstone; *Amelia, Countess of Rassendyll*, Miss Mabel Hackney. Characters in the Play: *Rudolf the Fifth—Rudolf Rassendyll*, Mr. George Alexander; *Michael, Duke of Streslau*, Mr. Herbert Waring; *Colonel Sapt*, Mr. W. H. Vernon; *Fitz von Tarlenheim*, Mr. Arthur Royston; *Captain Hentsau*, Mr. Laurence Cautley; *Detchard*, Mr. W. H. Day; *Bertram Bertrand*, Mr. Allan Aynesworth; *Marshal Strakencz*, Mr. Henry Loraine; *Lorenz Teppich*, Mr. F. Lomnitz; *Franz Teppich*, Mr. George P. Hawtrey; *Lord Topham*, Mr. George Bancroft; *Luáwig*, Mr. I. Dawson; *Toni*, Mr. Robert Loraine; *Josef*, Mr. Frank Dyall; *Princess Flavia*, Miss Evelyn Millard; *Antoinette de Mauban*, Miss Lily Hanbury; *Frau Teppich*, Miss Olga Brandon. Performances suspended 18th July; resumed (after a provincial tour) 20th October. Still running.

11. GAFFER JARGE: Rustic Study in One Act, by Alicia Ramsay. **Comedy.** Cast: *Gaffer Jarge*, Mr. Cyril Maude; *Master Tom*, Mr. Clarence Blakiston; *Benson*, Mr. J. Byron; *Mrs. Jones*, Miss Alice Mansfield; *Susie*, Miss Jessica Black.—Played in association with **THE LATE MR. CASTELLO.**

15. MICHAEL AND HIS LOST ANGEL: Play in Five Acts, by Henry Arthur Jones. **Lyceum.** Cast: *The Reverend Michael Feversham*, Mr. Forbes Robertson; *Sir Lyolf Feversham*, Mr. M. Hathorn; *Edward Lashmar*, Mr. Ian Robertson; *Andrew Gibbard*, Mr. W. Mackintosh; *The Reverend Mark Docwray*, Mr. Joseph Carne; *Withycombe*, Mr. John Willes; *Organist*, Mr. J. S. Crawley; *Organ Boy*, Master Miller; *Audrie Lesden*, Miss Marion Terry; *Rose Gibbard*, Miss Sarah Brooke; *Mrs. Cantelo*, Miss Henrietta Watson; *Fanny Clover*, Mrs. E. H. Brooke; *An Anglican Sister*, Miss Jay Lupton. Withdrawn 25th January.—On 27th January Mr. Oscar Barrett's Pantomime, **ROBINSON CRUSOE**, which had been played in the afternoon only, was put in the evening bill.

20. The Carl Rosa Opera Company began a series of afternoon performances at **Daly's**, lasting until 15th February, and including **Tannhäuser**, **Carmen**, **Jeannie Deans** (first time in London), **Lohengrin**, **Mignon**, **The Daughter of the Regiment**, **Faust**, **The Flying Dutchman**, **Hansel and Gretel**, **I Pagliacci**, and **Cavalliera Rusticana**.

25. THE COLLEEN BAWN: Drama founded by Dion Boucicault on Gerald Griffen's novel "The Collegians." First played on 10th September 1860 at the Adelphi; now revived at the **Princess's**. Cast: *Myles-na-Coppaleen*, Mr. Richard Purdon; *Hardress Cregan*, Mr. Tom Terriss; *Danny Mann*, Mr. Edward Rochelle; *Kyrle Daly*, Mr. Frank Harding; *Father Tom*, Mr. G. W. Cockburn; *Mr. Corrigan*, Mr. C. H. Kenney; *Bertie O'Moore*, Mr. G. Yates; *Hyland Creagh*, Mr. W. Aysom; *Servant*, Mr. Becket; *Corporal*, Mr. Sullivan; *Eily O'Connor*, Miss Beaumont Collins; *Mrs. Cregan*, Mrs. Dion Boucicault; *Sheelah*, Miss Harriett Clifton; *Kathleen Creagh*, Miss Madge Herrick; *Ducie Blennerhassett*, Miss Alice Vitu; *Anne Chute*, Miss Agnes Hewitt.—Played in association therewith, **HERE SHE GOES**, a Sketch by W. Sapté Junior. Cast: *Emmeline*, Miss Alice Vitu; *Boniface*, Mr. W. Aysom; *Sarah*, Miss Fannie Selby. Withdrawn 6th March.

30. THE FOOL OF THE FAMILY: Comedy in Three Acts, by Fergus Hume. **Duke of York's.** Cast: *Colonel Cardington*, Mr. Robert Pateman; *Peter Adolphus Grison*, Mr. Charles Cartwright; *Basil Lambert*, Mr. H. B. Irving; *Arthur Saville*, Mr. Wilfrid Forster; *Marlin*, Mr. Lyston Lyle; *Rose Lambert*, Miss Gertrude Kingston; *Kitty Trevor*, Miss Lena Ashwell; *Cousin Terry*, Miss Marie Lyons. Withdrawn 1st February.

FEBRUARY.

12. THE NEW BARMAID: A Musical Play in Two Acts, by Frederick Bowyer and W. E. Sprange; Music by John Crook. Originally produced at the Opera House, Southport, 1st July 1895; now first played in London. **Avenue.** Cast: *Captain Lovebury*, Mr. Harrison Brockbank; *Lieutenant Bradley*, Mr. Charles Rowan; *Colonel Claymore*, Mr. C. L. Welford; *Bertie White*, Mr. J. J. Dallas; *Monsieur Bonsor*, Mr. E. Dagnall; *Gussie*, Mr. Jack Thompson; *Tommy*, Miss Ingreville; *Inspector Hart*, Mr. Brandreth; *Club Porter*, Mr. Carling; *William White*, Mr. J. L. Shine; *Ethel Joy*, Miss Agnes Delaporte; *Lady Moullon*, Miss Maria Saker; *Brenda Louth*, Miss Maggie Hunt; *Mabel*, Miss Edith Denton; *Kitty*, Miss Edith Gain; *Laura*, Miss Marie Alexander; *Dora*, Miss Lottie Collins. Transferred to the **Opera Comique**, 8th June; withdrawn 3rd July.

14. JEDBURY JUNIOR: Light Comedy in Three Acts, by Madeleine Lucette Ryley. Originally produced at the Empire Theatre, New York, as "Christopher Junior," on 23rd September 1895. **Terry's.** Cast: *Christopher Jedbury, junior*, Mr. Frederick Kerr; *Mr. Christopher Jedbury*, Mr. John Beauchamp; *Major Hedway*, Mr. J. L. Mackay; *Tom Bellaby*, Mr. Arthur Playfair; *Mr. Glibb*, Mr. J. E. Bellamy; *Mr. Simpson*, Mr. Edward Beecher; *Whimper*, Mr. Gilbert Farquhar; *Job*, Mr. L. Power; *Mrs. Jedbury*, Miss Emily Cross; *Mrs. Glibb*, Miss Elsie Chester; *Nellie Jedbury*, Miss Eva Moore; *Dora Hedway*, Miss Maud Millett.—Preceded by **AN OLD GAR-**

DEN: Play in One Act, by Hill Davies. Cast: *Mildred Sandford*, Miss Mona K. Oram; *Rose Harmer*, Miss Doris Templeton; *David Brice*, Mr. W. J. Robertson; *Philip Melville*, Mr. O. Shillingford. Withdrawn 23rd May.

15. ON 'CHANGE: Comedy, adapted by Miss Eweretta Lawrence from the German (Von Moser's *Ultimo*). Produced at the Strand Theatre, 1st July 1885; now revived at the **Strand**. Cast: *James Burnett*, Mr. William Farren; *Professor Peckering Peck*, Mr. Felix Morris; *Tom*, Mr. Scott Buist; *Joe*, Mr. York Stephens; *Mouser*, Mr. James Welch; *De Haas*, Mr. E. H. Kelly; *Tiffin*, Mr. W. Beckwith; *Laomia*, Miss E. Spencer Brunton; *Miss Peck*, Miss Alice Mansfield; *Millie*, Miss Gwendolen Floyd; *Iris*, Miss Eweretta Lawrence. —Preceded by **THE MAN IN THE STREET:** Comedietta, by Louis N. Parker. Cast: *Philip Adair*, Mr. Scott Buist; *Jabez Gover*, Mr. James Welch; *Minnie*, Miss Gwendolen Floyd. Withdrawn 13th March.

20. MRS. PONDERBURY: Farcical Comedy in Three Acts, adapted by F. C. Burnand from MM. Blum and Toché's *Madame Mongodin*. Originally produced, on 2nd November 1895, at the Avenue Theatre as "Mrs. Ponderbury's Past"; now reproduced at the **Court**. Cast: *Matthew Ponderbury*, Mr. Charles Hawtrey; *Mervyn Thorpe*, Mr. Eric Lewis; *John Rumford*, Mr. Brandon Thomas; *Sir Rover Bearing*, Mr. W. Wyes; *Colonel Aversnack*, Mr. Aubrey Fitzgerald; *Hyacinth Grayling*, Mr. Willis Searle; *Dr. Orlover*, Mr. E. W. Tarver; *Peter*, Mr. W. F. Hawtrey; *Countess de Mojeski*, Miss Lottie Venne; *Ethel Peniston*, Miss Violet Lyster; *Lady Rover Bearing*, Miss Florence Haydon; *Susan*, Miss Evelyn Harrison; *Mrs. Ponderbury*, Mrs. John Wood. Withdrawn 21st May.

22. GOSSIP: A Play in Four Acts, by Clyde Fitch and Leo Dietrichstein. Originally produced in America; first played in London at the Grand Theatre, Islington, on 3rd June 1895; now reproduced at the **Comedy**. Cast: *Count Marcy*, Mr. Leonard Boyne; *Richard Stanford*, Mr. Herbert Stand-

ing; *Thomas Barry*, Mr. J. W. Pigott; *Dr. Robbins*, Mr. E. Cosham; *Gaston Berney*, Mr. Stuart Champion; *Hallows*, Mr. J. Byron; *Servant*, Mr. Mules Brown; *Mrs. Stanford*, Miss Eleanor Calhoun; *Miriam Stanford*, Miss Annette Skirving; *Mrs. Cummings*, Miss Cara Daniels; *Clara Cummings*, Miss Esme Beringer; *Mrs. Barry*, Mrs. Langtry. Withdrawn 21st March.

26. THE ROMANCE OF THE SHOPWALKER:

Comedy in Three Acts, by Robert Buchanan and Charles Marlowe (Harriet Jay). Produced two days previously at the Theatre Royal, Colchester. **Vaudeville.** Cast: *Thomas Tompkins*, Mr. Weedon Grossmith; *The Earl of Doverdale*, Mr. Sydney Warden; *Captain Dudley*, Mr. Sydney Brough; *Mr. Samuel Hubbard*, Mr. Frederick Volpe; *Alexander McCulloch*, Mr. David James; *Mr. Catchem*, Mr. C. H. Fenton; *Conningsby*, Mr. T. Hesselwood; *A Shopman*, Mr. Skinner; *Lady Munro*, Miss M. Talbot; *Lady Evelyn*, Miss May Palfrey; *Lady Mabel*, Miss Nina Boucicault; *Dorothy Hubbard*, Miss Annie Hill; *Mrs. Tompkins*, Miss M. A. Victor. Withdrawn 28th March.

27. FOR THE CROWN: Play in Four Acts, adapted

from François Coppée's *Four La Couronne*, by John Davidson. **Lyceum.** Cast: *Stephen*, Mr. Ian Robertson; *Prince Michael Brancomir*, Mr. Charles Dalton; *Constantine Brancomir*, Mr. Forbes Robertson; *Ibrahim*, Mr. William Mackintosh; *Lazare*, Mr. Frank Gillmore; *Ourosck*, Mr. J. Fisher White; *A Turkish Prisoner*, Mr. J. Culver; *A Sentinel*, Mr. J. Willes; *A Goat-herd*, Mr. Murray Hathorn; *A Page*, Miss Dora Barton; *Bazilide*, Miss Winifred Emery; *Anna*, Miss Sarah Brooke; *Militza*, Mrs. Patrick Campbell. Withdrawn 30th May.

MARCH.

2. SHAMUS O'BRIEN: Comic Opera in Two Acts,

Libretto by George H. Jessop, Music by C. Villiers Stanford. **Opera Comique.** Cast: *Shamus O'Brien*, Mr. Denis O'Sullivan; *Captain Trevor*, Mr. W. H. Stephens; *Mike*

Murphy, Mr. Joseph O'Mara; *Father O'Flynn*, Mr. C. Magrath; *Sergeant Cox*, Mr. Frank Fisher; *Lynch*, Mr. Garoghan; *Little Paudeen*, Master Ross; *Norah O'Brien*, Miss Kirkby Lunn; *Peggy*, Miss Winifred Ludlam; *Kitty O'Toole*, Miss Maggie Davies. Withdrawn 23rd May.

7. THE GRAND DUKE; OR, THE STATUTORY DUEL: Comic Opera in Two Acts, by W. S. Gilbert and Sir Arthur Sullivan. **Savoy.** Cast: *Rudolph*, Mr. Walter Passmore; *Ernest Dumkopf*, Mr. Charles Kenningham; *Ludwig*, Mr. Rutland Barrington; *Dr. Tannhäuser*, Mr. Scott Russell; *The Prince of Monte Carlo*, Mr. R. Scott Fishe; *Viscount Montone*, Mr. E. Carleton; *Ben Hashbas*, Mr. C. Herbert Workman; *Herald*, Mr. Jones Hewson; *The Princess of Monte Carlo*, Miss Emmie Owen; *Baroness von Krakenfeldt*, Miss Rosina Brandram; *Julia Jellicoe*, Madame Ilka von Palmay; *Lisa*, Miss Florence Perry; *Olga*, Miss Mildred Baker; *Gretchen*, Miss Ruth Vincent; *Bertha*, Miss Jessie Rose; *Elsa*, Miss Ethel Wilson; *Martha*, Miss Beatrice Perry. Withdrawn 10th July.

7. EAST LYNNE: Revival at the **Princess's**, by a Provincial Touring Company; a three weeks' season.

9. IN AND OUT OF A PUNT: Duologue by Henry V. Esmond. **St. James's.** Afternoon performance for a charity. Cast: *Margaret*, Miss Eva Moore; *Hugh*, Mr. Henry V. Esmond.

12. BLUE OR GREEN? Comedietta, by Mrs. Hugh Bell. **Comedy.** Cast: *Sophia Larkings*, Miss Carlotta Addison; *Betsinda Larkings*, Miss Beatrice Hesford; *A Telegraph Clerk*, Miss Robertson.—Also **THE BICYCLE:** Dramatic Sketch, by Mrs. Hugh Bell. Cast: *Dick Beauchamp*, Mr. Charles Hawtrey; *Armanda*, Miss Vane Featherstone; *Louise*, Miss Violet Lyster. Also **A HONEYMOON TRAGEDY:** Comedietta, by Mrs. W. K. Clifford. Cast: *Count Dal Mezzio*, Mr. Acton Bond; *Countess Dal Mezzio*, Mrs. Herbert Waring; *A Waiter*, Mr. Charles Lloyd. An afternoon performance.

14. SHADES OF NIGHT: a Fantasy in One Act, by R. Marshall. **Lyceum.** Cast: *Captain the Hon. Terence Trivett*, Mr. Frank Gillmore; *Winifred Yester*, Miss Ethel Weyburn; *Sir Ludovic Trivett*, Mr. J. Willes; *The Lady Mildred Yester*, Miss Henrietta Watson.—Played in association with **FOR THE CROWN.**

19. TRUE BLUE; OR, AFLOAT AND ASHORE: Naval Drama in Five Acts, by Leonard Outram and Stuart Gordon. **Olympic.** Cast: *Captain Drake*, Mr. J. F. Cornish; *Lieutenant Grey Maitland*, Mr. Alfred Bucklaw; *Lieutenant Mark Strachan*, Mr. William Rignold; *Lieutenant Jones*, Mr. Albert E. Raynor; *Sub-Lieutenant Algernon Skewes*, Mr. J. A. Bentham; *Midshipman Sprightly*, Miss Marion Huntley; *Midshipman Easy*, Mr. Leon Lion; *An Assistant-Engineer*, Mr. Duncan Tovey; *John Lobbett*, Mr. Charles Wilson; "*Polly*" *Hopkins*, Mr. Jarvis Widdicomb; "*Spud*" *Murphy*, Mr. Henry Bertram; *Joe Cockles*, Mr. A. Gerard; *Timothy Flatfoot*, Mr. Fred Solo; *Corporal of the Watch*, Mr. Tom Taylor; *A Ward-Room Servant*, Mr. Charles Seymour; *The Governor of Gibraltar*, Mr. H. R. Teesdale; *The Governor of Algeciras*, Mr. F. A. Lane; *Sir George Majoribanks—Monsieur Vandeloupe*, Mr. Leonard Outram; *Spero Xicluna*, Mr. Edward O'Neill; *A Spanish Hawker*, Mr. Percy Everard; *Alfonso*, Mr. Bernard Stavordale; *Carlos*, Mr. Roland Stewart; *Rodriguez*, Mr. J. Beauvaine; *Guardia Civil*, Mr. Stanislaus Calhaem; *Carlotta Malrayo*, Mrs. Raleigh; *Alice Majoribanks*, Miss Laura Graves; *Daphne Bower*, Miss Mary Bates; *Rose Pringle*, Miss Kate Phillips. Withdrawn 25th April.

21. OUTWARD BOUND: Musical Sketch, by Miss Nellie Ganthony Terrys.

APRIL.

4. THE GAY PARISIENNE: Musical Comedy in Two Acts, by George Dance; Music by Ivan Caryll. Originally produced as above, at the Opera House, Northampton, 1st

October 1894; first played in London at the Elephant and Castle, 23rd March, by a touring company; now reproduced at the **Duke of York's Theatre**. Cast: *Mr. Ebenezer Honeycomb*, Mr. Lionel Rignold; *Mrs. Honeycomb*, Miss Lily Belmore; *Nora*, Miss Violet Robinson; *Mabel*, Miss Marion Dolby; *Major Fossdyke*, Mr. W. H. Denny; *Angela*, Miss Violet Ellicott; *May*, Miss Edith Stuart; *Ethel*, Miss E. Carlton; *Gladys*, Miss Edith Bartlett; *Maud*, Miss Edith Mada; *Edith*, Miss Rose Montgomery; *Violet*, Miss Ivy Hertzog; *Rose*, Miss Maud Hoppe; *Amos Dingle*, Mr. Hubert Willis; *Tom Everleigh*, Mr. Edgar Stevens; *Algernon P. Ducie*, Mr. James Francis; *Percy Tooling*, Mr. C. Guildford; *Cecil Smyth*, Mr. P. Leslie; *Hans*, Mr. Harry Kilburn; *Gretchen*, Miss Harriet Wood; *Anna*, Miss Edith Milton; *Fritz*, Mr. Garth; *Ruth*, Miss Louie Freear; *Blatter Walter*, Mr. Ackerman May; *M. Auguste Pompier*, Mr. Frank Wheeler; *Mlle. Julie Bonbon*, Miss Ada Reeve. Still running.

4. **THE STAR OF INDIA:** Drama in Five Acts, by George R. Sims and Arthur Shirley. **Princess's**. Cast: *Sir Roland Stanmore*, Mr. Lyston Lyle; *Captain Stanmore*, Mr. Clifton Alderson; *Mark Stanmore*, Mr. George Young; *Dick Hatfield*, Mr. Walter Beaumont; *Lieut. Dollamore*, Mr. Sidney Howard; *Mr. Wentworth*, Mr. A. E. Matthews; *Corporal O'Sullivan*, Mr. Charles H. Kenny; *Aleem Khan*, Mr. Robert Pateman; *Arthur Hopkins*, Mr. J. T. Macmillan; *Vernon Hopkins*, Mr. Frank Wyatt; *Tom Tully*, Mr. F. Colson; *Jim Green*, Mr. H. Wade; *Dan Williams*, Mr. George Yates; *Subadar Hira Singh*, Mr. Gerald Morley; *Superintendent Willoughby*, Mr. Charles Franmore; *Captain Fordyce*, Mr. Grey; *Major Wallace*, Mr. Lyster; *Kate Armiger*, Miss Hettie Chattell; *Mrs. Wentworth*, Miss Kate Tyndall; *Dora Wilton*, Miss Nellie Gregory; *Oriana*, Miss Fairbrother; *Clarry Beamish*, Miss Helen Farrington; *Mrs. Beamish*, Miss Harriett Clifton; *Mrs. Musters*, Miss Helen Vicary; *Mara-quita*, Miss Agnes Hewitt. Withdrawn 16th May.

8. **A MOTHER OF THREE:** Farce in Three Acts, by Clo Graves. **Comedy**. Cast: *Professor Murgatroyd*, Mr.



Felix Morris; *Sir Wellington Port*, K.C.B., Mr. Cyril Maude; *Napier Outram Port*, Mr. Stuart Champion; *Captain Tackle*, Mr. Clarence Blakiston; *Chevelcy Thrupp*, Mr. Cosmo Stuart; *Lady Port*, Miss Rose Leclercq; *Amelia*, Miss Mackenzie; *Sooza*, Miss Annie Goward; *Cassiopeia*, Miss Esme Beringer; *Vesta*, Miss Lily Johnson; *Aquila*, Miss Audrey Ford; *Mrs. Murgatroyd*, Miss Fanny Brough.—Preceded by **THE GUINEA STAMP**: Play in One Act, by Cyril Hallward. Cast: *Sir Charles Trefusis*, Mr. Ernest Cosham; *Jack Manners*, Mr. Cosmo Stuart; *Cecil Arbuthnot*, Mr. Stuart Champion; *Mabel Trefusis*, Miss May Edouin; *Nellie Robinson*, Miss Jessie Bateman. Withdrawn 4th June.

9. **THE SIN OF ST. HULDA**: Drama in Five Acts, by G. Stuart Ogilvie. **Shaftesbury**. Cast: *Otho*, Mr. Charles Cartwright; *Heinric*, Mr. Lewis Waller; *John Knipperdolling*, Mr. Henry Kemble; *Manteuffel*, Mr. Kenneth Black; *Count Ulric*, Mr. George Hippiusley; *Joachim*, Mr. Edmund Covington; *Herman*, Mr. Charles Goodhart; *Ernest*, Mr. Frank McDonnell; *Wilhelm*, Mr. A. Anderson; *Konrad*, Mr. Leslie Thompson; *Nikolaus*, Mr. H. Deane; *Franz*, Mr. Henry Nelson; *Stortebecker*, Mr. Gilbert Trent; *Tipstaff*, Mr. Henry; *Hugo*, Mr. A. Chenery; *A Herald*, Mr. Frank Morley; *An Officer*, Mr. James Spiller; *Maximilian*, Mr. Frank Thornton; *Dame Friederike*, Miss Annie Webster; *Liese*, Miss Helena Dacre; *Marte*, Miss E. Brinsley Sheridan; *Elizabeth*, Mrs. Arthur Ayres; *Hedwig*, Miss Marie Lyons; *Ann*, Miss Lillian Brennard; *Elsa*, Miss Annie Burton; *Maria*, Miss Leonie Norbury; *Gretchen*, Miss Rachel; *Doris*, Miss Dorothy Harwood; *St. Hulda*, Miss Kate Rorke. Withdrawn 25th April.

11. **BIARRITZ**: Musical Farce, words by Jerome K. Jerome and Adrian Ross; music by F. Osmond Carr. **Prince of Wales's**. Cast: *John J. Jenkins*, Mr. Arthur Roberts; *Johannes*, Mr. Fred Kaye; *General Tomassino*, Mr. Eric Thorne; *Rodney Kemp*, Mr. Roland Cunningham; *Duke of Melton Mowbray*, Mr. Algernon Newark; *Dr. Arlistreete*, Mr. L. F. Chapuy;

Honourable Johnnie, Mr. Harold Eden; *Gendarme*, Mr. Walker Marnock; *Tessie Carewe*, Miss Phyllis Broughton; *Mr. Charlie Bargus*, Miss Millie Hylton; *Niagara G. Wackett*, Miss Sadie Jerome; *Enrique*, Miss Ellas Dee; *Babette*, Miss Pierrette Amella; *Duchess of Melton Mowbray*, Miss Harrie Doreen; *Mrs. Carew*, Miss Adelaide Newton; *Florence*, Miss Eva Ellerslie; *Jane*, Miss Julia Kent; *Elizabeth*, Miss Carrie Benton; *Janet*, Miss Kittie Loftus. Withdrawn 20th June.

16. MONSIEUR DE PARIS: Play in One Act, by Alicia Ramsay and Rudolph de Cordova. Originally produced as "The Executioner's Daughter" at the Gaiety Theatre, Hastings, on 6th April 1896. **Royalty.** Cast: *Georges Delpit*, Mr. Mark Kinghorne; *Henry Le Febvre*, Mr. Henry Vibart; *Mère Lisette*, Mrs. Henry Leigh; *Jacinta*, Miss Violet Vanbrugh.

21. THE ROGUE'S COMEDY: Play in Three Acts, by Henry Arthur Jones. **Garrick.** Cast: *Mr. Bailey Prothero*, Mr. Willard; *Miss Jennison*, Miss Geraldine Oliffe; *Mr. Lambert*, Mr. W. T. Lovell; *Sir William Clarabut*, Mr. Cecil Crofton; *Lady Clarabut*, Lady Monckton; *Nina Clarabut*, Miss Cora Poole; *Lady Dovergreen*, Miss Robertha Erskine; *Sir Thomas Dovergreen*, Mr. Sydney Brough; *Lord John Bucklow*, Mr. David James; *The Marquis of Bicester*, Mr. George Canning; *Mr. Sydenham*, Mr. J. R. Crauford; *Mrs. Sydenham*, Mrs. H. Cane; *Mr. Reffell*, Mr. A. B. Tapping; *Mrs. Reffell*, Miss Keith Wakeman; *Miss Proye*, Miss Ellen Meyrick; *Mr. Hubbock*, Mr. George Willoughby; *Mr. Chester*, Mr. Webber; *Mr. Pinniger*, Mr. W. Levy; *Mr. Robert Cushing*, Mr. Herbert Standing; *Palmer*, Mr. Hamilton Knight; *First Footman*, Mr. Albert Sims; *Second Footman*, Mr. L. Wenman; *Servant at Lady Dovergreen's*, Mr. G. James. Withdrawn 30th May.

22. MY ASTRAL BODY: Farce in Three Acts, by W. C. Hudson and Nicholas Colthurst. **Court.** An afternoon performance. Cast: *Clarke Cariston*, Mr. Yorke Stephens; *Clarke Cariston's Astral Body*, Mr. Beckwith; *Albert Thayer*, Mr. C. Lowne; *David Meredith, J.P.*, Mr. Ernest Hendrie;

Naingre Phu, Mr. J. F. Cornish; *Bullam Pore*, Mr. W. Lee; *Miss Mildred Cariston*, Miss Fanny Coleman; *Anne Meredith*, Miss Fairbrother; *Kate Harland*, Miss Helen Petrie.

24. MARY PENNINGTON, SPINSTER: Comedy in Four Acts, by W. R. Walkes. **St. James's.** An afternoon performance. Cast: *Mr. Timothy Hale*, Mr. Cyril Maude; *George Armstrong*, Mr. Frank Fenton; *Algy Blomfield*, Mr. Sydney Brough; *Mary Pennington*, Miss Kate Rorke; *Lady Maitland*, Miss Olga Brandon; *Prudence Dering*, Miss Mary Jerrold; *Mrs. Pennington's Servant*, Miss Furtado Clarke; *Dr. Hale's Servant*, Mr. W. A. Chandler.

25. THE GEISHA: A Story of a Teahouse: Japanese Musical Play in Two Acts, by Owen Hall; Lyrics by Harry Greenbank; Music by Sidney Jones. **Daly's.** Cast: *O Mimosa San*, Miss Marie Tempest; *Juliette Diamant*, Miss Juliette Nesville; *Nami*, Miss Christine Yudall; *O Kiku San*, Miss Emilie Herve; *O Nana San*, Miss Marie Fawcett; *O Kinkoto San*, Miss Elise Cook; *O Komuraski San*, Miss Marie Collette; *Lady Constance Wynne*, Miss Maud Hobson; *Miss Marie Worthington*, Miss Blanche Massey; *Miss Ethel Hurst*, Miss Hetty Hamer; *Miss Mabel Grant*, Miss Alice Davis; *Miss Louie Plumpton*, Miss Margaret Fraser; *Miss Molly Seamore*, Miss Lettie Lind; *Reginald Fairfax*, Mr. C. Hayden-Coffin; *Fred Cunningham*, Mr. Louis Bradfield; *Arthur Cuddy*, Mr. Leedham Bantock; *George Grimston*, Mr. Sydney Ellison; *Tommy Stanley*, Miss Lydia Flopp; *Captain Kalana*, Mr. William Philp; *Takemini*, Mr. Fred Rosse; *Wun Hi*, Mr. Huntley Wright; *The Marquis Imari*, Mr. Harry Monkhouse. Still running.

28. THE NEW BABY: Farce in Three Acts, adapted by Arthur Bouchier from *Der Rabenvater*, by H. Fisher and J. Jarno. Originally produced, on 6th April 1896, at the Gaiety Theatre, Hastings. **Royalty.** Cast: *Colonel Wilberforce Walker*, Mr. Arthur Bouchier; *Commodore Van Gutt*, Mr. W. Blakeley; *Petruchio Gomez*, Mr. W. G. Elliott; *Harry*, Mr.

Charles Troode; *Drusilla Walker*, Miss Alice Mansfield; *Patience Van Gutt*, Mrs. B. M. de Solla; *Faith*, Miss Irene Vanbrugh; *Kate Gomez*, Miss Katherine Stewart; *Pascoe*, Miss Lilian Milward. Withdrawn 16th May.

29. A NIGHT OUT: Farical Comedy in Three Acts, adapted by Seymour Hicks from *Hôtel du Libre Echange*, by MM. Georges Feydeau and Maurice Desvallières. **Vaudeville.** Cast: *Joseph Pinglet*, Mr. George Giddens; *Paillard*, Mr. Charles Sugden; *Mathieu*, Mr. William Wykes; *Maxime*, Mr. Aubrey Fitzgerald (succeeded by Mr. George Grossmith, Junior); *Brochard*, Mr. Joseph Carne; *Boulot*, Mr. Gus Danby; *Bastien*, Mr. E. W. Thomas; *Ernest*, Mr. Herbert Peters; *Botticelli*, Mr. Neville Doone; *Marcelle*, Miss Fannie Ward; *Angelique*, Mrs. Edmund Phelps; *Victorine*, Miss Pattie Browne; *A Lady*, Miss Eva Murton; *Hyacinthe*, Miss Lottie Sargent; *Violette*, Miss E. Barrington; *Marguerite*, Miss Eileen Concanen; *Rose*, Miss Edith Henderson. Still running.

MAY.

8. First part of HENRY IV.: Shakespeare's Historical Play. **Haymarket.** An afternoon performance. Cast: *Sir John Falstaff*, Mr. Tree; *King Henry IV.*, Mr. William Mollison; *Henry, Prince of Wales*, Mr. Frank Gillmore; *Prince John of Lancaster*, Mr. Berte Thomas; *Earl of Westmoreland*, Mr. F. Percival Stevens; *Thomas Percy*, Mr. Fred Everill; *Henry Percy*, Mr. Charles Allan; *Henry Percy, surnamed Hotspur*, Mr. Lewis Waller; *Edmund Mortimer*, Mr. C. M. Hallard; *Sir Walter Blunt*, Mr. Frank McVickers; *Sir Richard Vernon*, Mr. A. E. Hippisley; *Poins*, Mr. Herbert Ross; *Owen Glendower*, Mr. Holman Clark; *Douglas*, Mr. Henry Vibart; *Francis*, Mr. D. J. Williams; *Bardolph*, Mr. Lionel Brough; *Gadshill*, Mr. Gerald Dumaurier; *Peto*, Mr. Gayer Mackay; *Sheriff*, Mr. Arthur Cole; *First Messenger*, Mr. J. Rosier; *Second Messenger*, Mr. Montague; *First Traveller*, Mr. T. Shannon; *Second Traveller*, Mr. Grafton; *Hotspur's Servant*, Mr. Yardley; *Lady Hotspur*, Mrs. Tree; *Lady*

Mortimer, Miss Marion Evans; *Mistress Quickly*, Miss Kate Phillips.

9. A MATCHMAKER: Comedy in Four Acts, by Clo Graves and Gertrude Kingston. **Shaftesbury.** Cast: *Archibald Rolles*, Mr. Lewis Waller; *The Marquess of Westbourne*, Mr. C. P. Little; *The Hon. Charles Soper*, Mr. E. W. Gardiner; *The Bishop of Dorminster*, Mr. Kenneth Black; *The Earl of Cranboisie*, Mr. Lesly Thomson; *Bingley Bligh, M.P.*, Mr. Alfred Maltby; *Waite*, Mr. Gilbert Trent; *Roberts*, Mr. Charles Ross; *Wilhelmina*, Miss Florence West; *Georgiana Ridout*, Miss Beatrice Ferrar; *Flora*, Miss Spencer Brunton; *Ethel*, Miss Daisy Brough; *Betty Bullen*, Miss Nina Boucicault; *Lady Louisa Holdawle*, Miss Fanny Coleman; *Mrs. Waite*, Mrs. Arthur Ayers; *Margaretta*, Miss Lena Ashwell; *Mrs. Lane*, Miss Gertrude Kingston. Withdrawn 22nd May.

13. JO: Drama in Three Acts, adapted from Charles Dickens's "Bleak House." Originally produced (in London) at the Globe Theatre, 22nd February 1876. **Drury Lane.** Cast: *Sir Lester Dedlock*, Mr. Rudge Harding; *Mr. Tulkinghorn*, Mr. Howard Russell; *Mr. Snagsby*, Mr. Alfred Balfour; *Mr. Chadband*, Mr. Robb Harwood; *Mr. Guppy*, Mr. Charles Stuart; *Mr. Bucket*, Mr. McVicar; *The Coroner*, Mr. F. Grove; *Servant*, Mr. H. Clark; *Beadle*, Mr. Young; *Lady Dedlock*, Miss Alma Stanley; *Hortense*, Miss Ada Lee; *Esther*, Miss Joan Burnett; *Mrs. Rounsell*, Miss Fanny Robertson; *Rosa*, Miss Kathleen Gordon; *Guster*, Miss Katie Lee; *Jenny*, Miss Mary Bates; *Mrs. Snagsby*, Mrs. Vernon Paget; *Jo*, Miss Jennie Lee. Withdrawn 30th May.

15. ROMEO AND JULIET: An afternoon performance for the benefit of the Actors' Orphanage Fund. **Prince of Wales's.** Cast: *Romeo*, Miss Esme Beringer; *Juliet*, Miss Vera Beringer.

16. ROSEMARY: Play in Four Acts, by Louis N. Parker and Murray Carson. **Criterion.** Cast: *Sir Jasper Thorndyke*, Mr. Charles Wyndham; *Professor Jogram*, Mr.

J. H. Barnes; *Captain Cruickshank, R.N.*, Mr. Alfred Bishop; *William Westwood*, Mr. Kenneth Douglas; *George Minifie*, Mr. James Welch; *Abram*, Mr. F. H. Tyler; *Stilt Walker*, Mr. John Byron; *Mrs. Cruickshank*, Miss Carlotta Addison; *Mrs. Minifie*, Miss Emily Vining; *Priscilla*, Miss Annie Hughes; *Dorothy Cruickshank*, Miss Mary Moore. Withdrawn 25th July; reproduced 6th October; withdrawn for Mr. Wyndham's Christmas vacation, 26th December.

18. THE SPAN OF LIFE: Melodrama in Four Acts, by Sutton Vane. Originally produced at the Grand Theatre, Islington, 6th June 1892. **Princess's.** Cast: *Richard Blunt*, Mr. Ernest E. Norris; *Dunstan Leech*, Mr. Austin Melford; *Nutty Brown*, Mr. Herbert Vivian; *Dismal Brown*, *Dapper Brown*, and *Tipton Perch*, The Leonhardt Troupe; *Inspector Fergusson*, Mr. George Yates; *Cecil Jelf*, Miss Gladys Whyte; *Cecil Blunt*, Miss Dolly Love; *Joshua Gurnett*, Mr. Charles Franmore; *Abel Perry*, Mr. Fred Colson; *Azrek*, Mr. Gerald Kennedy; *Mrs. Jelf*, Miss Harriett Clifton; *Shrove Tuesday*, Miss Sydney Fairbrother; *Kate Heathcote*, Miss Kate Tyndall. Withdrawn 27th June.

19. THE FORTUNE OF WAR: Sketch by F. C. Phillips. **Criterion.** Cast: *Dick Harcourt*, Mr. W. L. Abingdon; *Finette*, Miss Lottie Venne; *Lucille*, Miss Dorothy Wood. Afternoon performance for a benefit.

21. JOSIAH'S DREAM: Farical Comedy in Three Acts, by Charles Rogers. **Strand.** Cast: *Josiah Jenkins*, Mr. Sidney Harcourt; *Algy Gushington*, Mr. Graham Wentworth; *John Hardy*, Mr. George Raiemond; *William*, Mr. Richard Blunt; *Caroline*, Miss Ada Branson; *Georgina*, Miss Lettice Fairfax; *Johanna Bucklaw*, Miss Mary Allestree; *Frederica*, Miss Florence L. Forster.—Also **GOOD-BYE:** Play in One Act, by Henry T. Johnson. Cast: *Lieut. Stanley Tibbets*, Mr. C. M. Lowne; *Lieut. Jack Melrose*, Mr. J. A. Bentham; *Angus Crosby*, Mr. Richard Blunt; *Trooper Kitson*, Mr. Francis Hawley; *Florence Forester*, Miss Mary Allestree; *Hetty*, Miss Florence L. Forster. Withdrawn 10th June.

28. HIS RELATIONS: Farcical Comedy in Three Acts, by H. A. Saintsbury. **Avenue.** An afternoon performance. Cast: *Major-General Faraday*, Mr. Walter McEwan; *Edward Fitz-Coolington*, Mr. H. A. Saintsbury; *Frederick Lake*, Mr. J. Farren Soutar; *Thomas Pinker*, Mr. W. Cheesman; *Matthew Barlings*, Mr. Frank Wood; *Morgan*, Mr. Graham Price; *Gertie Fitz-Coolington*, Miss Florence Fordyce; *Rose Maydue*, Miss Audrey Ford; *Jennings*, Miss Marianne Caldwell; *Jenny Montgomery*, Miss Dorothy Chesney.—Also **'TWIXT NIGHT AND MORN:** a Dramatic Study, by Edward Martin Seymour. Cast: *A Man*, Mr. Edward O'Neill; *A Woman*, Miss Florence Fordyce.

JUNE.

1. NITOUCHE: Musical Comedy in Three Acts, by MM. Meilhac, Millaud, and Hervey. **Court.** Cast: *Major Count of Castle Gibus*, Mr. Robert Pateman; *Celestin*, Mr. Louis Mackinder; *Fernand de Champlatreux*, Mr. Joseph Tapley; *Loriot*, Mr. J. Willes; *Robert*, Mr. Lawrence Grossmith; *Gustav*, Mr. E. W. Tarver; *Stage Manager*, Mr. Arthur Playfair; *Call-boy*, Master Trebell; *Corinne*, Miss Florence Levey; *The Lady Superior*, Miss F. Haydon; *The Janitress*, Miss Delia Carlisle; *Sylvia*, Miss Louisa Velda; *Lydia*, Miss Florrie Wilson; *Zimblette*, Miss Carl; *Denise*, Miss May Yohe.—Also **UNCLE THATCHER:** a Play in One Act, by Clive Brooke. Cast: *Matthew Arbutson*, Mr. J. Willes; *John Laxder*, Mr. Roy Horniman; *Frank Ainsleigh*, Mr. E. W. Tarver; *Dick Thatcher*, Mr. W. F. Hawtrey; *Mrs. Ainsley*, Miss Florence Hayden; *Agnes*, Miss Violet Lyster. Withdrawn 30th July.

2. THE QUEEN'S PROCTOR: Comedy in Three Acts, adapted by Herman Merivale from *Divorçons*, by Victorien Sardou and Emile de Najac. **Royalty.** Cast: *Sir Victor Crofton, Bart.*, M.F.H., Mr. Arthur Bourchier; *The O'Paque*, M.P., Mr. Henry Bayntun; *Cesar Borgia*, Mr. W. G. Elliot; *Joseph Popplecombe*, Mr. Ernest Hendrie; *Reddie*, Mr. Mark Kinghorne; *Thompson*, Mr. Charles Troode; *Stokes*, Mr. Henry Kitts; *Gardener*, Mr. Metcalfe Wood; *Boy*, Master

Bottomley; *Lady Crofton*, Miss Violet Vanbrugh; *Lady Roller*, Miss E. Scott Daymar; *The Hon. Miss Pilkington*, Miss Helen Rous; *Mrs. Maydew*, Miss Mabel Beardsley; *Williams*, Miss Katharine Stewart. Withdrawn 31st July.

3. MAGDA: Play in Four Acts, adapted by Louis N. Parker from Hermann Sudermann's play, "Heimath."
Lyceum. Cast: *Leopold Schwartz*, Mr. James Fernandez; *Magda*, Mrs. Patrick Campbell; *Marie*, Miss Sarah Brooke; *Augusta*, Mrs. E. H. Brooke; *Franziska von Wendlowski*, Miss Alice Mansfield; *Lieutenant Max von Wendlowski*, Mr. Frank Gillmore; *Heftlerdingk*, Mr. Forbes Robertson; *Dr. Von Keller*, Mr. Scott Buist; *Professor Beckman*, Mr. Murray Hathorn; *Von Klebs*, Mr. J. Fisher White; *Frau von Klebs*, Miss Bessie Page; *Frau von Eltrich*, Miss Abbott Fuller; *Frau Schumann*, Miss De Burgh; *Theresa*, Miss Marianne Caldwell. Withdrawn 19th June.

4. A RESCUED HONOUR: Comedy in Three Acts, by Arthur Fry. **Avenue.** An afternoon performance. Cast: *Bertie Clifford*, Mr. Charles Weir; *Noah Drayton*, Mr. Cecil Morton York; *Dr. Deprez*, Mr. Webb Darleigh; *Fred Hanbury*, Mr. Gordon Harvey; *Uncle Harvey*, Mr. George Mudie; *Holmes*, Mr. J. W. Ryder; *Richard Barton*, Mr. Albert E. Raynor; *Reuben Drake*, Mr. Owen Harris; *Tommy Tabor*, Mr. George Marlowe; *Clara Clifford*, Miss Agnes Knights; *Agnes*, Miss May Cross; *Aunt Harvey*, Miss Isabel Grey; *Peggy Barton*, Miss Charlotte Morland; *Simpson*, Miss Violet Ackhurst; *Alice Barton*, Miss Decima Moore.

6. CARMEN: Dramatic version by Henry Hamilton of Prosper Mérimée's novel. **Gaiety.** Cast: *Don José Libengoa*, Mr. Charles Dalton; *Don Manoel Sarceda*, Mr. Thomas Kingston; *Lucas Mendes*, Mr. Luigi Lablache; *Bernal D'Aila*, Mr. J. R. Crauford; *Priest*, Mr. Acton Bond; *Pedro Diaz*, Mr. George Humphrey; *Dancaire*, Mr. G. R. Foss; *Remendado*, Mr. Graeme Young; *Lillas Pastia*, Mr. Albert Sims; *Beppo*, Mr. T. Courtice; *Dolores*, Miss Lena Ashwell; *Lisa*, Miss Eva Williams; *Anita*, Miss Helena Dacre; *Teresa*,

Miss Alexes Leighton; *Inez*, Miss May Marshall; *Juana*, Miss Madge Meadows; *Carmen*, Miss Olga Nethersole. Withdrawn 20th June.

8. Sarah Bernhardt's season at the **Comedy**, of twelve nights, during which she played **Adrienne Leconuvreur**, **Magda**, **La Tosca**, **Fedora**, and **La Dame aux Camélias**. On 20th June **A MOTHER OF THREE** was revived for a few performances.

10. **THE GREATEST OF THESE—**: Play in Four Acts, by Sydney Grundy. Originally produced at the Grand Theatre, Hull, 13th September 1895. **Garrick** (Mr. and Mrs. Kendal's season). Cast: *Mr. Armitage*, J.P., *Mr. Kendal*; *The Rev. Luke Dormer*, Mr. H. Kemble; *Philip Curzon*, Mr. Nutcombe Gould; *Lawrence Armitage*, Mr. Rodney Edgecumbe; *Grace Armitage*, Miss Nellie Campbell; *Mrs. Cragg*, Mrs. Charles Sennett; *Servant*, Miss Frances Owen; *Mrs. Armitage*, Mrs. Kendal. Withdrawn 18th July.

11. **THE SUNBURY SCANDAL**: Farcical Comedy in Three Acts, by Fred Horner. **Terry's**. (Played three nights previously at Eastbourne.) Cast: *Sir John Quail*, Q.C., M.P., Mr. Frederick Kerr; *William Joyce*, Mr. F. W. Garden; *Carl Rottenstein*, Mr. Robb Harwood; *Captain Wilfred Quail*, Mr. Wilfred Draycott; *Horace Binks*, Mr. G. E. Bellamy; *James Ostler, Esq., J.P.*, Mr. Gilbert Farquhar; *Magistrate's Clerk*, Mr. L. Paver; *Tompkins*, Mr. Herbert E. Terry; *Inspector Joyce*, Mr. W. J. Robertson; *Police Sergeant*, Mr. John Gomah; *Lady Quail*, Miss Fanny Brough; *The Hon. Constance Cowley*, Miss Maud Millett. Withdrawn 15th June.

12. **PLAYING THE GAME**: Musical Farcical Comedy in Three Acts, written by Willie Younge and Arthur Flaxman, composed by Fred Eplett. **Strand**. Cast: *Earl Penruddock*, Mr. J. S. Blythe; *Countess Penruddock*, Miss Marion Sterling; *Lord Peter Penruddock*, Mr. J. W. Bradbury; *Lady Amy Penruddock*, Miss Violet Darrell; *Colonel Michael O'Clancey*, Mr. Rupert Rusden; *Mrs. O'Clancey*, Miss Nellie Newton; *Emmer-*

son O'Clancey, Mr. Deane Brand; *Lady Nesta Danby*, Miss Kate Chard. Production for one week.

20. THE SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL: Sheridan's Comedy. **Lyceum.** Cast: *Sir Peter Teazle*, Mr. William Farren; *Sir Oliver Surface*, Mr. Edward Righton; *Sir Benjamin Backbite*, Mr. Cyril Maude; *Joseph Surface*, Mr. Forbes Robertson; *Charles Surface*, Mr. Fred Terry; *Crabtree*, Mr. Arthur Wood; *Careless*, Mr. Frank Gillmore; *Rowley*, Mr. Charles Dodsworth; *Moses*, Mr. Fred Thorne; *Snake*, Mr. Sydney Warden; *Trip*, Mr. Norman Forbes; *Sir Harry Bumper*, Mr. Jack Robertson; *Sir Toby*, Mr. J. S. Crawley; *Servant to Joseph*, Mr. Clifford Soames; *Lady Sneerwell's Servant*, Mr. Sydney Lawrence; *Lady Teazle*, Mrs. Patrick Campbell; *Mrs. Candour*, Miss Rose Leclercq; *Lady Sneerwell*, Miss Henrietta Watson; *Maria*, Miss Sarah Brooke; *Lady Teazle's Servant*, Miss Italia Conti. Withdrawn 24th July.—“Farewell Programme” of the Robertson-Harrison Management, 25th July, including Scenes from “Romeo and Juliet,” “Magda,” “For the Crown,” and “Henry VIII.”

22. ON THE MARCH: Musical Comedy in Two Acts, by William Yardley, B. C. Stephenson, and Cecil Clay; Music by John Crook, Edward Solomon, and Frederick Clay. Originally produced at the Theatre Royal, Sheffield, on 18th May 1896. Now revived at the **Prince of Wales's**. Cast: *Fitzallerton Scroggs*, Mr. Thomas E. Murray; *Colonel McAlister*, Mr. Cecil Ramsay; *Captain Felix McAlister*, Mr. Templar Saxe; *Lieutenant Jack Ferris*, Mr. C. H. E. Brookfield; *Sergeant Struggles*, Mr. Horace Mills; *Corporal Rush*, Mr. Cecil Freare; *Captain King*, Mr. A. Wilson; *Edith de Bang*, Miss Maud Boyd; *Florence Pringle*, Miss Frances Earle; *Elfrida Molyneux*, Miss Augusta Wallers; *Maggie Welland*, Miss Alice Atherton. Withdrawn 5th September.

25. MAJOR RAYMOND: Play in Four Acts, by Philip Havard. **Terry's.** An afternoon performance. Cast: *Major Raymond*, Mr. W. L. Abingdon; *Mr. Dyson*, Mr. Frederick Volpe; *Sir John Beale*, Mr. Julian Cross; *Michael Kennedy*,

Mr. G. Hippisley; *Oliver Fleming*, Mr. Oswald York; *Bernard*, Viscount Ashbrooke, Mr. C. M. Lowne; *Frewin*, Mr. Guy Waller; *Isaac Rubinstein*, Mr. Sydney Burt; *Binks*, Mr. S. F. Harrison; *Molly Dyson*, Miss Eva Moore; *Lady Dorothea Gunthorpe*, Miss Madge Raye; *Mrs. Graham*, Miss Nora Carewe; *Tomkins*, Miss Alice Chippendale; *Mrs. Rubinstein*, Miss Davis Webster; *Rachael Rubinstein*, Miss Lena Cross; *Miss Maud Graham*, Miss Beatrice Bailly; *Mrs. Fleming*, Miss Mary Raby.

25. A HUSBAND'S HUMILIATION: Comedietta in One Act, by Annie Hughes. **Criterion.** Cast: *George Wildfire*, Mr. Edmund Maurice; *Mrs. Wildfire*, Miss Annie Hughes; *Mr. Bicillus*, Mr. Herbert Ross; *Servant*, Mr. Leslie Thomson. Afternoon performance for a charity.

29. HER FATHER'S FRIEND: Romantic Play in One Act, by the late H. A. Rudall. **Savoy.** An afternoon performance. Cast: *Marquis de Tournac*, Mr. G. W. Cockburn; *Dermont*, Mr. Sydney Paxton; *Maurice*, Mr. Harrison Hunter; *Père Jerome*, Mr. H. A. Saintsbury; "*Tiger*" *Jacques*, Mr. Charles Dodsworth; *General Handsberger*, Mr. George Riddell; *Camille*, Mr. Clarence Fitzclarence; *First Soldier*, Mr. Albert E. Raynor; *Second Soldier*, Mr. William Burchill; *Third Soldier*, Mr. Ferdinand Conti; *Rosette*, Miss Kate Turner; *Aline*, Miss Italia Conti. Preceded by an "Incident" in One Act, by Ian Robertson, entitled **THE PITY OF IT**. Cast: *Alec Bond*, Mr. Ian Robertson; *Jack Hilliard*, Mr. Sydney Brough; *Anne*, Miss Violet Royal; *Rhoda Irwin*, Miss Italia Conti.

29. THE GRIP OF IRON: Sensational Drama in Four Acts, adapted by Arthur Shirley, from Belot's *Les Etrangers*. **Princess's.** (First time at a West End Theatre; 5035th performance.) Cast: *Jagon*, Mr. Fred Powell; *Lorentz de Ribas*, Mr. James E. Thompson; *Paul Blanchard*, Mr. Charles East; *Alphonse de Coucou*, Mr. Arthur E. Godfrey; *Dodot*, Mr. Gus Wheatman; *Robert de Belfort*, Mr. Wilfred Carr; *M. de Baudin*, Mr. Charles Girdlestone; *Loustalot*, Mr. Andrew

Liston; *Governor of the Prison*, Mr. Sidney White; *Captain of the Raven*, Mr. Gilbert Jones; *Warden of the Raven*, Mr. Harry Richmond; *Warden of La Grande Roquette*, Mr. William Pollard; *Footman*, Mr. Thomas Griffen; *Prison Barber*, Mr. William Griffen; *Captain Gueron*, Mr. Amos Townsend; *Sophie Blanchard*, Miss Florence Nelson; *Cora*, Miss East Robertson; *Marie Guerin*, Miss Frances Ruttledge; *Babette*, Miss Cissie Liston; *Zelie de Ribas*, Miss Florence Townsend; *La Goulet*, Miss Nellie Arline; *Mdlle. de Charal*, Miss Annie Garrett; *Mdlle. Delaney*, Miss Phyllis Kent; *Mdlle. Meuvree*, Miss Beatrice Holmes; *Mdlle. Legros*, Miss Annie Newman. Withdrawn 11th July.

JULY:

2. THE MUMMY: Farce in Three Acts, by George D. Day and Allan Reed. Originally produced for copyright purposes at the Royalty Theatre, Chester, on 6th September 1895. **Comedy.** An afternoon performance. Cast: *Rameses*, Mr. Lionel Brough; *Professor Jeremy Garsop*, Mr. W. Cheesman; *Ezra van Tassel Smythe*, Mr. Robb Harwood; *Jack Tibbs*, Mr. Stuart Champion; *North Marston*, Mr. Clarence Blakiston; *Alvena Garsop*, Miss Alice Mansfield; *Eva Garsop*, Miss Lily Johnson; *Mabel Woodruff*, Miss Jessie Bateman; *Cleopatra*, Miss Annie Goward; *Hattie van Tassel Smythe*, Miss Charlotte G. Walker.

4. BEHIND THE SCENES: Comedy in Three Acts, adapted by G. P. Hawtrey and Felix Morris from "The First Night" (translated from *Le Pere de la Debutante*). **Comedy.** An afternoon performance. Cast: *Achille Talma Dufard*, Mr. Felix Morris; *Ferdinand Schreiber*, Mr. W. F. Hawtrey; *Jack Cardew*, Mr. Cosmo Stuart; *Alexander Huggett*, Mr. Ernest Cosham; *John Duncan*, Mr. Frederick Volpe; *Mr. Wilson*, Mr. Harry Ford; *Mr. Vaughan*, Mr. William Aysom; *Mr. Bennett*, Mr. Frank Lacy; *Mr. Bucalossi*, Mr. E. Bucalossi; *Jeffreys*, Mr. C. King; *Tommy*, Mr. R. Earle; *Miss Pettigrew*, Miss Alice Beet; *Miss Hamilton*,

Miss Gertrude Henriquez ; *Miss Dufard*, Miss Sarah Brooke ; *Maud Beresford*, Miss Alma Stanley.

9. THE LITTLE GENIUS: Comic Opera in Four Acts, by Sir Augustus Harris and Arthur Sturges ; Music by Eugen von Taubert, additional numbers by J. M. Glover and Landon Ronald. **Shaftesbury.** Cast : *Lord Lomond*, Mr. C. P. Little ; *The Chevalier Tween*, Mr. E. J. Lonnen ; *Signor Gordon*, Mr. Arthur Williams ; *Mr. Knox*, Mr. W. Cheesman ; *Edward Lord Calmore*, Mr. Harrison Brockbank ; *Lord Jermyn*, Mr. Cecil Lawrence ; *Bathing Machineman*, Mr. A. T. Hendon ; *Footmen*, Mr. S. White and Mr. G. Shuter ; *Miss Georgie Knox*, Miss Maggie Roberts ; *Arabella*, Miss Kate Phillips ; *Lady Plantagenet*, Miss Birdie Sutherland ; *The Hon. Miss Edith Byng*, Miss Edith Johnston ; *Miss Mount Gore*, Miss Lillian Menelly ; *Lady Mabel Clare*, Miss Nell Gwynne ; *Miss Sackville*, Miss Maurice ; *Paolo*, Miss Annie Dirkens (eventually superseded by Miss Florence St. John). Withdrawn 26th November.

9. THE LIAR: Foote's Comedy, revived at the **Royalty** for a few afternoon performances. Cast : *Sir James Elliot*, Mr. Charles Troode ; *Old Wilding*, Mr. Ernest Hendrie ; *Young Wilding*, Mr. Arthur Bouchier ; *Papillon*, Mr. Henry Vibart ; *John*, Mr. Metcalfe Wood ; *William*, Mr. Alexander Stuart ; *Miss Grantham*, Miss Irene Vanbrugh ; *Miss Godfrey*, Miss Helen Rous.

11. THE COUNTESS GUCKI: Comedy in Three Acts, adapted by Augustin Daly from the original of Franz von Schonthan. **Comedy.** Cast : *Court Counsellor von Mittersteig*, Mr. James Lewis ; *Clementina*, Mrs. G. H. Gilbert ; *Lilli*, Miss Helma Nelson ; *General Suwatscheff*, Mr. Edwin Stevens ; *Bruno von Neuhoff*, Mr. Charles Richman ; *Cousin Leopold*, Mr. Sydney Herbert ; *Baumann*, Mr. William Haseltine ; *Wensel*, Mr. Robert Shephard ; *Rosa*, Miss Mabel Gilman ; *The Countess Hermiana Trachan*, Miss Ada Rehan. Withdrawn 27th July.

11. THE MIKADO. Revival at the **Savoy**. Still running.

13. MY GIRL: Musical Play in Two Acts, by James T. Tanner; Music by F. Osmond Carr, Lyrics by Adrian Ross. **Gaiety.** Cast: *The Rev. Arthur Mildreth*, Mr. Charles Ryley; *Theo*, Mr. Paul Arthur; *Alexander McGregor*, Mr. John Le Hay; *Dr. Tertius Huxtable*, Mr. Fred Kaye; *Lord Barum*, Mr. Lawrance D'Orsay; *Leopold van Fontein*, Mr. W. H. Rawlins; *Saunders*, Mr. Leslie Holland; *Weekes*, Mr. Willie Warde; *The Mayor of Southampton*, Mr. Colin Coope; *John Fahee*, Mr. W. Downes; *Lady Bargrave*, Miss Maria Davies; *Beatrice*, Miss Ethel Haydon; *Rebecca*, Miss Marie Montrose; *Phoebe Toodge*, Miss Katie Seymour; *Melissa Banks*, Miss Ethel Sydney; *Mayoress*, Miss Connie Ediss; *Dorothy*, Miss Kate Adams; *Mary*, Miss Ada Maitland; *Miss Verinder*, Miss Florence Lloyd; *Mrs. Porkinson*, Miss Grace Palotta; *May*, Miss Ellaline Terriss. Withdrawn 28th November. Reproduced at the **Garrick**, 1st December. Still running.

13. DRINK. Revival at the **Princess's** for two weeks. Mr. Warner as *Coupean*.

14. THE HONOURABLE MEMBER: Comedy Drama in Three Acts, by A. W. Gattie. Tentative afternoon performance. **Court.** Cast: *Samuel Ditherby, M.P.*, Mr. G. W. Anson; *Luke Heron*, Mr. W. Scott Buist; *James Hubbock*, Mr. George Bernage; *Beamer*, Mr. James Welch; *Williams*, Mr. Graham Browne; *Davies*, Mr. Thomas Courtice; *Mrs. Ditherby*, Mrs. Edmund Phelps; *Mrs. Hubbock*, Mrs. A. R. McIntosh; *Margery Douglass*, Miss Madge McIntosh.

15. THE LITTLEST GIRL: Play in One Act, dramatised by Robert Hilliard from Richard Harding Davis's story, "Her First Appearance." **Court.** Cast: *Van Bibber*, Mr. Robert Hilliard; *Davenport*, Mr. Roy Horniman; *The Littlest Girl*, Miss Alice Cecile; *Mr. Carruthers*, Mr. Sidney Howard.—Played in connection with **NITOUCHE**.

28. LOVE ON CRUTCHES: Comedy in Three Acts, based, by Augustus Daly, on a German piece by Heinrich Stobitzer. **Comedy.** Cast: *Annie Austen*, Miss Ada Rehan; *Sydney Austen*, Mr. Charles Richman; *Guy Roverley*, Mr. Sidney Herbert; *Dr. Epenetus Quattles*, Mr. G. H. Gilbert; *Mr. Bitteredge*, Mr. James Lewis; *Podd*, Mr. William Haseltine; *Bells*, Mr. Robert Shephard; *Eudoxia Quattles*, Mrs. G. H. Gilbert; *Mrs. Margery Gwynn*, Miss Sybil Carlisle; *Besta*, Miss Helma Nelson; *Netty*, Miss Gerda Wisner. Withdrawn 8th August.

AUGUST.

1. IN SIGHT OF ST. PAUL'S: Drama in Four Acts, by Sutton Vane. **Princess's.** Cast: *Mr. Chichester*, Mr. Story Gofton; *Tom Chichester*, Mr. Ernest Leicester; *Harry Chichester*, Mr. George Hippisley; *John Gridstone*, Mr. Austin Melford; *Fretty Burnsides*, Mr. Waller Howard; *Gillie Fletcher*, Mr. Lyston Lyle; *Dennis Sheridan*, Mr. A. Rymon; *David Treacher*, Mr. Harry Cave; *Jim Palfrey*, Mr. Herbert Vyvyan; *Inspector Clarkson*, Mr. Gerald Kennedy; *Prescot*, Mr. Chris Walker; *Amos*, Mr. C. Astley; *A Chelsea Pensioner*, Mr. Thomas Kean; *A Greenwich Pensioner*, Mr. S. Foley; *A Drummer Boy*, Mr. George Yates; *Cynthia Dell*, Miss Keith Wakeman; *Beatrice Moreland*, Miss Alice Yorke; *The Countess Felstar*, Miss Flora Wills; *Mrs. Burlington Marsh*, Miss Mary Bates; *Lady Snow*, Miss Lily Gordon; *Rosie*, Miss Winifred Lang; *Becky Vetch*, Miss Florrie Millington; *Gracie Chichester*, Miss Sydney Fairbrother; *Aileen Millar*, Miss Kate Tyndal. Withdrawn 19th September.

3. LOST IN NEW YORK: Play in Five Acts, by Leonard Grover. **Olympic.** Cast: *Arthur Wilson*, Mr. G. H. Harker; *Horatio Chester*, Mr. William Lee; *"Hackensack"* George, Mr. A. B. Cross; *Martin Purcell*, *Tramp*, Mr. Charles E. Edwards; *Anon Ally*, Mr. C. Stuart Johnson; *Dr. Arnold*, Mr. Robert Escott; *Mate of the Steamer "Bellevue"*, Mr. James E. Fish; *Guard of the Insane Asylum*, Mr. E. A. June; *Mrs.*

Henrietta Wilson, Miss Maggie Hunt; *Jennie Wilson*, Miss Lily B. Sinclair; *Caroline Peabody*, Miss Leslie Bell; *Matron of the Insane Asylum*, Mrs. S. Calhaem; *Marie*, Miss Esther Phillips; *Little Susie*, Petite Lucy. Withdrawn 5th September.

11. THE MUMMY: Farce in Three Acts, by George D. Day and Allan Reed. Reproduced after a tentative afternoon performance, for which see page 381. **Comedy.** Cast: *Rameses*, Mr. Lionel Brough; *Professor Jeremy Garsop*, Mr. Frederick Volpe; *Ezra Van Tassel Smythe*, Mr. Ernest Percy; *Jack Tibbs*, Mr. Stuart Champion; *North Marston*, Mr. Clarence Blakiston; *Alvena Garsop*, Mrs. Julia Brutone; *Eva Garsop*, Miss Noney Seabrooke; *Mabel Woodruff*, Miss Doris Templeton; *Cleopatra*, Miss Annie Goward; *Hattie Van Tassel Smythe*, Miss Elliot-Page. Withdrawn 5th September.

15. WHETHER OR NO: Musical Duologue, by Adrian Ross and W. Beach; Music by Bertram Luard Selby. **Savoy.** Cast: *He*, Mr. Scott Russell; *She*, Miss Emmie Owen.—Played in association with **THE MIKADO**.

20. A BLIND MARRIAGE: Play in Four Acts, by Francis Francis. **Criterion.** Cast: *Jefferson D. Hurd*, Mr. Herbert Standing; *Lord Langdale*, Mr. Herbert Waring; *Jim Spencer*, Mr. Charles Fulton; *Dolly Talbot*, Mr. H. V. Esmond; *Gussy Talbot*, Mr. Arnold Lucy; *Servant*, Mr. C. Terric; *Mrs. Saville*, Miss Carlotta Addison; *Miss Saville*, Miss Eva Moore; *Linda Logan*, Miss Kate Korne. Withdrawn 3rd October.

22. MY ARTFUL VALET: Farcical Comedy, in Three Acts, adapted by James Mortimer from *Le Truc d'Arthur*, by Chivot and Duru (Palais Royal, 14th October 1882), and originally produced at the Globe, 10th November 1891, as "Gloriana." **Terry's.** Cast: *Mr. Leopold Fitz-Jocelyn*, Mr. J. G. Grahame; *Mr. Timothy Chadwick*, Mr. Alfred Maltby; *Count Evitoff*, Mr. Ivan Watson; *Baron Kronikoff*, Mr. Rupert Lister; *Major Stonideff*, Mr. John Byron; *Spinks*, Mr. James Welch; *Richards*, Mr. Frank Saker; *Mrs. Gloriana Lovering*,

Miss Edith Blande; *Jessie Chadwick*, Miss Maggie Byron; *Aitty*, Miss Lydia Cowell. Withdrawn 3rd October.

22. NEWMARKET: a Racing Comedy with Music, by Mrs. Frank Taylor; Lyrics by Ernest Boyde Jones. Originally produced at Manchester, 22nd June 1896. **Opera Comique.** Cast: *Lord Kempton*, Mr. Wilfred Forster; *Colonel Stockbridge*, Mr. Forbes Dawson; *Tom Snaffle*, Mr. Willie Edouin; *Ronald Mayver*, Mr. Fred Featherstone; *M. Brisson*, Mr. Laurence Caird; *Ferdie Craddock*, Mr. Kenneth Altamont; *Sir William Ascotte*, Mr. Aubrey Fitzgerald; *Charlie Fenn*, Mr. George A. Seager; *Jemmy Smart*, Mr. Littledale Power; *Billie Price*, Mr. Bryant Rashlie; *Sam Bale*, Mr. Fred Topham; *Nap Jones*, Mr. Paul Boswell; *Mr. Bob Cordyce*, Mr. George Gregory; *Mr. Dick Groundsell*, Mr. George Curtiss; *Tim Crop*, Mr. Henry Wynne; *Clerk of the Scales*, Mr. Victor M. Seymour; *Poppy Snaffle*, Miss May Edouin; *Lady Ascotte*, Miss Sadie Jerome; *Lady Windsor*, Miss Kate Sergeantson; *Lady Sandown*, Miss J. Butler; *Miss Alexandra Parkes*, Miss Stafford; *Mrs. Nap Jones*, Miss Greene Taylor; *Kitty*, Miss Virginia Boswell; *Maggie*, Miss Rose Hamilton; *Mrs. Charles Fenn*, Miss Winnie Carl. Withdrawn 17th October.

26. BOYS TOGETHER: Drama in Four Acts, by C. Haddon Chambers and J. Comyns Carr. **Adelphi.** Cast: *Frank Villars*, Mr. William Terriss; *Hugo Forsyth*, Mr. W. L. Abingdon; *The Earl of Harpendon*, Mr. C. W. Somerset; *Tom Wrake*, Mr. J. D. Beveridge; *Viscount Ayot*, Mr. Harry Nicholls; *Rudolph Klein*, Mr. Mackintosh; *Hassan*, Mr. Luigi Lablache; *Colonel Lannock*, Mr. Oscar Adye; *The Hon. Fred Cholmondeley*, Mr. James Lindsay; *Captain Lyster*, Mr. E. Covington; *Herbert Askew*, Mr. Alban Atwood; *Reginald Lane*, Mr. J. W. Macdonald; *Orderly*, Mr. Pollard; *Peters*, Mr. Webb Darleigh; *Gurney*, Mr. J. Cole; *Ginger Smith*, Mr. Alfred Phillips; *Agha Fula*, Mr. Cyril Merton; *Arab Messenger*, Mr. Caleb Porter; *Ethel Wood*, Miss Millward; *Lady Ayot*, Miss Alice Kingsley; *Mrs. Babbage*, Miss Kate Kearney; *Miriam*, Miss Nesbitt. Withdrawn 5th December.

27. MONTE CARLO: Musical Comedy in Two Acts, by Sydney Carlton; Lyrics by Harry Greenbank; Music by Howard Talbot. **Avenue.** Cast: *Sir Benjamin Currie*, Mr. Charles Rock; *General Frederick Boomerang*, Mr. Eric Lewis; *Fred Dorian*, Mr. Richard Green; *James*, Mr. E. W. Garden; *Harry Verinder*, Mr. A. Vane-Tempest; *Professor Lorimer*, Mr. Robb Harwood; *Belmont*, Mr. Guy Fane; *Standring*, Mr. C. Wilford; *Captain Rossiter*, Mr. W. H. Kemble; *A Croupier*, Mr. Roland Carse; *Francois*, Mr. Edward Espinosa; *Mrs. Carthew*, Miss Lottie Venne; *Dorothy*, Miss Kate Cutler; *Ethel*, Miss Hettie Lund; *Gertie Gelatine*, Miss May Belfrey; *Bertie Gelatine*, Miss Venie Belfrey; *Little Jemima*, Miss Lalor Shiel; *A Midshipman*, Miss Kittie Abrahams; *Susanne*, Miss Emmie Owen. Withdrawn 6th November.

SEPTEMBER.

15. LORD TOM NODDY: Musical Piece in Two Acts, written by George Dance; composed by F. Osmond Carr. Originally produced at the Theatre Royal, Bradford, 6th April 1897; now reproduced at the **Garrick**. Cast: *Lord Tom Noddy*, Little Tich; *Magnum*, Mr. Cecil Frere; *Colonel Ben Nevis*, Mr. Picton Roxborough; *Miss Ben Nevis*, Miss Gladys Ffolliott; *Solomon Van Delle*, Mr. H. C. Barry; *Lieutenant Crowshaw, R.N.*, Mr. George Paulton; *Miss Polly Primrose*, Miss Kate James; *Marion Forsyth*, Miss Sybil Arundale; *Constance Forsyth*, Miss Katie Leechman; *Angela*, Miss Violet Friend; *Maud*, Miss Dora Nelson; *Ethel*, Miss Maud Traunter; *Florrie*, Miss Maidie Hope; *Beatrice*, Miss Olive Dalmour; *Marguerite*, Miss Germaine de Marco; *May*, Miss Edna Grace; *Gladys*, Miss Edith Singleton; *Augustus A. Jackson*, Mr. Sydney Harcourt; *Nurse Phoebe*, Miss Mabel Love. Withdrawn 14th November.

19. THE DUCHESS OF COOLGARDIE: Melodrama in Five Acts, by Euston Leigh and Cyril Clare. **Drury Lane.** Cast: *Sybil Gray*, Miss Hilda Spong; *Wallaroo*, Miss

Laura Johnson; *Kathleen O'Mara*, Miss Laura Linden; *Harry*, Miss Valli Valli; *Nellie Grey*, Miss Edith Jordan; *Big Ben*, Mr. Charles Glenney; *Miles Hooligan*, Mr. John L. Shine; *Sailor Jack*, Mr. Laurence Cautley; *Bendigo Bill*, Mr. Edward O'Neill; *Yorkshire Dick*, Mr. C. M. Lowne; *The Captain*, Mr. E. H. Vanderfelt; *Tom Airy*, Mr. Oswald Yorke; *Hiram Vannicker*, Mr. Claud Llewellyn; *Melbourne Jerry*, Mr. Watty Brunton, Junior; *Herr Von Schwop*, Mr. E. Story Gofton; *Lord Glendargle*, Mr. Ernest Bertram; *Macdonald*, Mr. Isaacson; *The Warden of Coolgardie*, Mr. Herman Vezin. Withdrawn 26th November.

22. CYMBELINE: Shakespeare's Play. **Lyceum.** Cast: *Cymbeline*, Mr. F. H. Macklin; *Cloten*, Mr. Norman Forbes; *Posthumus Leonatus*, Mr. Frank Cooper; *Belarius*, Mr. Frederick Robinson; *Guiderius*, Mr. B. Webster; *Arviragus*, Mr. Gordon Craig; *Pisanio*, Mr. Tyars; *Cornelius*, Mr. Lacy; *Two British Captains*, Mr. Archer and Mr. Needham; *Two British Lords*, Mr. Hague and Mr. Belmore; *Queen*, Miss Genevieve Ward; *Helen*, Miss Tyars; *Imogen*, Miss Ellen Terry; *Iachimo*, Sir Henry Irving; *Philario*, Mr. Fuller Mellish; *Caius Lucius*, Mr. H. Cooper Cliffe; *A Roman Captain*, Mr. Tabb. Withdrawn 11th December.

23. TWO LITTLE VAGABONDS: Melodrama, adapted by George R. Sims and Arthur Shirley from Pierre Decourcelle's *Les Deux Gosses*. **Princess's.** Cast: *George Thornton*, Mr. Ernest Leicester; *Captain Darville*, Mr. Lyston Lyle; *John Scarth*, Mr. Walter Howard; *Bill Mullins*, Mr. Edmund Gurney; *Dido Bunce*, Mr. Chris Walker; *The Cough Drop*, Mr. Edward W. Colman; *Leeson*, Mr. Herbert Vyvyan; *Hargill*, Mr. Gerald Kennedy; *Dr. Lynn*, Mr. C. Astley; *Job Gargoyle*, Mr. F. Lloyd; *Whiffin*, Mr. Thomas Kean; *Footman*, Mr. A. Rymon; *Marion Thornton*, Miss Geraldine Oliffe (succeeded by Miss Hilda Spong); *Barbara Scarth*, Miss Le Bert; *Sister Randall*, Miss Eva Williams; *Maid Servant*, Miss Dorothy Campbell; *Biddy Mullins*, Miss Marie Foley; *Wally*, Miss Sidney Fairbrother; *Dick*, Miss Kate Tyndall. Still running.

24. TEDDY'S WIVES: Farcical Comedy in Three Acts, previously done at Eastbourne, on 4th April; and at Kilburn, on 1st August; the characters of the piece being taken from "The Mormon," by W. D. Calthorpe, produced at the Vaudeville, 10th March 1887. **Strand.** Cast: *The Hon. Teddy Miles*, Mr. Mallaby; *Oliver Walford*, Mr. Gerald Moore; *The McNab*, Mr. Fred Thorne; *Solomon Isaacs*, Mr. Cecil H. Thornbury; *Choldy*, Mr. J. Wheatman; *Mrs. Cottingham*, Miss Emily Thorne; *Nora*, Miss Audrey Ford; *Mrs. Crupples*, Miss Alice Mansfield; *The Hon. Mrs. Miles*, Miss Maud Millett.—Preceded by **DREAM FACES.** Cast: *Margaret*, Mrs. Boughton; *Lucy*, Miss Muriel Ashwynne; *Philif*, Mr. Percy Brough; *Robert*, Mr. Royston Keith. Withdrawn 30th December.

OCTOBER.

3. MR. MARTIN: Play in Three Acts, by Charles Hawtrej. **Comedy.** Cast: *Sir Charles Sinclair*, Mr. Henry Kemble; *Harry Sinclair*, Mr. W. T. Lovell; *Martin Heathcote*, Mr. Charles Hawtrej; *George S. Martin*, Mr. Charles Brookfield; *The Hon. George Bamfylde*, Mr. Frederick Volpe; *Algy Pakenham*, Mr. Alfred Mathews; *Mr. Kilfoyle*, Mr. William F. Hawtrej; *Watkins*, Mr. H. Deane; *Footman*, Mr. Stephenson; *Mona Carew*, Miss Jessie Bateman; *The Hon. Mrs. George Bamfylde*, Miss Marjorie Griffiths; *Tiny Merridew*, Miss Nina Boucicault; *Sophia O'Flanagan*, Miss Rose Leclercq; *Maudie Vavasour*, Miss Lottie Venne.—Preceded by **A WHITE STOCKING:** Comedy in One Act, by Edward Ferus and Arthur Stewart. Cast: *Mr. Stapleton*, Mr. W. F. Hawtrej; *Lydia Stapleton*, Miss Elliot Page; *Captain Faversham*, Mr. George Hippiusley; *Peter*, Mr. H. Deane. Withdrawn 13th November.

3. THE WHITE SILK DRESS: Musical Farce in Two Acts; Words and Lyrics by H. J. W. Dam; Music by A. Maclean, R. Somerville, and G. Byng. **Prince of Wales's.** Cast: *Jack Hammersley*, Mr. Arthur Roberts; *Sir James Turner*, Mr. Eric Thorne; *Lord Macready*, Mr. E. H. Kelly;

Major Penyon, Mr. J. Furneaux Cook; *Professor Beasley*, Mr. Walter Uridge; *Cousin Charles Hammersley*, Mr. Harold Eden; *Angus McWhirter*, Mr. George Traill; *Skinderson*, Mr. W. Cheesman; *Bolingbroke*, Mr. L. F. Chapuy; *Bellamy*, Mr. Lawrence Caird; *Office Boy*, Master Harry Rignold; *Mary Turner*, Miss Decima Moore; *Mrs. Pennington*, Miss Ellas Dee; *Lady Turner*, Miss Singleton; *A Lady from Algiers*, Mrs. E. H. Brooke; *Miss Talbot*, Miss Eva Ellerslee; *Miss Essex*, Miss Pierette Amella; *Edith Hammersley*, Miss Carrie Benton; *Mrs. Bailey*, Miss Kitty Loftus. Still running.

10. THE BELLE OF CAIRO: Play, with Music, by Cecil Raleigh and Kinsey Peile; Music and Lyrics by Kinsey Peile. **Court.** Cast: *The Earl of Bulcester*, Mr. Charles Wilbrow; *Lady Molly Rosemere*, Miss Ethel Earle; *Lady Ermyntrode Rosemere*, Miss Milly Thorne; *James Parker*, Mr. Arthur Nelstone; *Susan Smith*, Miss Maud Wilmot; *Cook's Guide*, Mr. F. D. Pengelly; *Mr. Stallabrass*, Mr. V. M. Seymour; *Maud Stallabrass*, Miss Rieke; *Martha Stallabrass*, Miss Loraine; *Mary Stallabrass*, Miss Bliss; *Mr. Patching*, Mr. H. V. Surrey; *Mrs. Patching*, Miss Grace Dudley; *Luigi*, Mr. Horniman; *Duval Bey*, Mr. Eugene Mayeur; *Captain Sir Gilbert Fane, Bart.*, Mr. John Peachey; *Major Trevor*, Mr. Philip Leslie; *Lieutenant Marchmont*, Mr. E. W. Tarver; *Surgeon Captain Cree*, Mr. Roy; *Ali Ibrahim*, Mr. Michael Dwyer; *Barbara*, Miss Giulia Warwick; *Nephtys*, Miss May Yohe. Withdrawn on the eve of Christmas.

10. A CROWN OF THORNS: Drama by Gilbert Elliott. Originally produced at the Eden Theatre, Brighton, on 7th September 1896. **Olympic.** Cast: *Count Maurice Vauthier*, Mr. Gilbert Elliott; *Henry Lefranc*, Mr. Dudley Clinton; *Baron Holstein*, Mr. William Felton; *Froude*, Mr. John Ottaway; *Picot*, Mr. Harry Paulton, Junior; *Hans*, Mr. John G. Macmahon; *Abbè Lavalle*, Mr. Louis Ford; *Officer of the Directoire*, Mr. Charles M. Holmes; *Doctor Ricardo*, Mr. A. Robertson; *Countess Vauthier*, Mrs. Walter Edwin; *Salonara*, Miss Alice de Winton; *Ninette*, Miss George Wright; *Marie*, Miss Millicent Marsden; *Mother Bagnolet*,

Miss Emily Edwin; *Mathilde, Princess de Zodiac*, Miss Agnes Hewitt. Withdrawn a fortnight later.

17. UNDER THE RED ROBE: Play in Four Acts, adapted by Edward Rose from Stanley Weyman's novel of the same name. **Haymarket.** Cast: *Gil de Berault*, Mr. Herbert Waring; *Richelieu*, Mr. Sydney Valentine; *Henri de Cocheforêt*, Mr. Hamilton Revelle; *The Marquis de Pombal*, Mr. J. L. Mackay; *De Fargis*, Mr. Albert Mayer; *Captain Larolle*, Mr. Cyril Maude; *Lieutenant*, Mr. Bernard Gould; *Sir Thomas Brunt*, Mr. Dawson Milward; *Clon*, Mr. E. Holman Clarke; *Louis*, Mr. Clarence Blakiston; *Sergeant*, Mr. Rupert Lister; *Malpas*, Mr. Cecil Hope; *Landlord*, Mr. Leslie Victor; *Monk*, Mr. Mules Brown; *Secretary*, Mr. D. J. Smith; *Major Domo*, Mr. Granville Barker; *Doorkeeper*, Mr. C. Hamilton; *Renée de Cocheforêt*, Miss Winifred Emery; *Madame de Cocheforêt*, Miss Eva Moore; *Madame Zaton*, Miss Fanny Coleman; *Suzette*, Miss Rhoda Halkett; *Waitress*, Miss Annie Saker. Still running.

21. LOVE IN IDLENESS: Three Act Comedy, by Louis N. Parker and E. J. Goodman. Originally produced at the Theatre Royal, Brighton, 13th March 1896. **Terry's.** Cast: *Mortimer Pendlebury*, Mr. Edward Terry; *Frank*, Mr. W. E. Ashcroft; *Rushey Platt, Esq., M.P.*, Mr. Gilbert Farquhar; *Jack Fenton*, Mr. Sidney Brough; *Eugene Gondinot*, Mr. H. De Lange; *Maggie*, Miss Hilda Rivers; *Louise Gondinot*, Miss Beatrice Ferrar; *Abigail Bright*, Miss Bella Pateman; *Mrs. Trott*, Miss Kate Mills; *Martha*, Miss Jessie Danvers.—Preceded by **A WOMAN'S PROPER PLACE:** Duologue by J. Wilton Jones and Gertrude Warden. Cast: *Mr. Richard Montague Robertson*, Mr. W. E. Ashcroft; *Mrs. Richard Montague Robertson*, Miss Beatrice Ferrar. Withdrawn 19th December; but "Love in Idleness" was revived for a series of afternoon performances during Christmas-tide.

24. HIS LITTLE DODGE: Play in Three Acts, by Justin Huntley McCarthy, adapted from *Le Système Ribardier*

of George Feydeau and Maurice Hennequin. **Royalty.** Cast: *Sir Hercules Little*, Mr. Fred Terry; *The Hon. Mandeville Hobb*, Mr. Weedon Grossmith; *Mr. Pollaby Pellow*, Mr. Alfred Maltby; *Gryce*, Mr. Frank Dyall; *The Lady Miranda Little*, Miss Ellis Jeffreys; *Cany*, Miss Leila Repton.—Preceded by **THE STORM**: Play in One Act, by Ian Robertson. Cast: *Le Barrier*, Mr. H. V. Esmond; *Pascal*, Mr. H. B. Irving; *Louissette*, Miss Dorothy Hammond. Still running.

NOVEMBER.

3. POOR OLD PERKINS: Farcical Comedy in Three Acts, by Percival H. T. Sykes. An afternoon performance. **Strand.** Cast: *John Thomas Perkins*, Mr. Harry Paulton, Jun.; *Captain Frank Stone*, Mr. Percy Murray; *Lieut. James Rill*, Mr. George Holwood; *Signor Bertini*, Mr. Harold Child; *Mrs. Perkins*, Miss Ada Murray; *Ada Perkins*, Miss Ada St. Ruth; *Blanche Merton*, Mrs. Ivy Dacre; *Mary Trotter*, Miss Thea Lesbrooke; *Signora Bertini*, Miss Ethel Adams.—Preceded by **FOR THE CZAR**: One Act Tragedy, by Percival H. T. Sykes. Cast: *Petra Fedorovitch*, Miss Thea Lesbrooke; *Alexina Roumanoff*, Miss Cybil Wynne; *Karl Monomachos*, Mr. Percy Murray; *Vladimir Roumanoff*, Mr. Harold Child; *Ivan Vasilivitch*, Mr. Charles Bernhardt; *Sergeant Schakovsky*, Mr. Jack Haddon.

4. DONNA DIANA: A Poetical Comedy in Four Acts, adapted, and to a great extent re-written, from the German version of Moreto's *El Desden con el Desden*, by Westland Marston. Revival at the **Prince of Wales's Theatre**. An afternoon performance. Cast: *Don Cesar*, Mr. Arthur Bouchier; *Don Luis*, Mr. Henry Vibart; *Don Gaston*, Mr. Charles Troode; *Don Diego*, Mr. Mark Kinghorne; *Perin*, Mr. W. G. Elliot; *Donna Laura*, Miss Mabel Beardsley; *Donna Fenisa*, Miss E. Scott Daymar; *Floretta*, Miss Irene Vanbrugh; *Donna Diana*, Miss Violet Vanbrugh.

II. ROUND A TREE: Play in One Act, by W. H. Risque. **Vaudeville.** Cast: *Grundy*, Mr. Neville Doone;

Mrs. Grundy, Miss Sybil Grey; *Lobbett*, Mr. Cairns James; *Josephine*, Miss Florence Ward; *Sam*, Mr. George Grossmith, Junior.—Played in association with **A NIGHT OUT**.

16. THE MANXMAN: Play in Five Acts, dramatised by Wilson Barrett from the novel of the same name by Hall Caine. Originally played at the Grand Theatre, Leeds, 22nd August 1894. This version now first played in London. **Lyric.** Cast: *Pete Quilliam*, Mr. Wilson Barrett; *Philip Christian*, Mr. Austin Melford; *Ross Christian*, Mr. Horace Hodges; *Cesar Cregreen*, Mr. Ambrose Manning; *Monly Missitt*, Mr. George Havard; *Professor Mawley*, Mr. G. Bernage; *Black Tom*, Mr. Stafford Smith; *Johnnie*, Mr. C. Derwood; *Dr. Mylechreest*, Mr. Percy Forster; *Jonique Jelly*, Mr. Marcus St. John; *Kate Cregreen*, Miss Maud Jeffries; *Miss Christian*, Miss Alice Gambier; *Nancy*, Miss Daisy Belmore; *Bella Kelly*, Miss Rose Pendennis. Played alternatively with **THE SIGN OF THE CROSS**. Withdrawn 19th December.

17. THE HAVEN OF CONTENT: Play in Four Acts, by Malcolm Watson. Originally produced at the Prince's Theatre, Bristol, 22nd October 1896. An afternoon performance **Garrick**. Cast: *Clive Northcote*, Mr. Ernest Leicester; *Lord Henry Silcroft*, Mr. Julius Knight; *James Fenton, M.P.*, Mr. John Beauchamp; *Mr. Vulliamy*, Mr. A. E. George; *Mr. Cheadley*, Mr. R. E. Warton; *Evans*, Mr. R. J. Beauchamp; *Saunders*, Mr. Lesly Thomson; *Lady Jane Sudeley*, Miss Granville; *Mrs. Fenton*, Miss M. Talbot; *Chris*, Miss Haidee Wright.

19. A WHITE ELEPHANT: Farce in Three Acts, by R. C. Carton. **Comedy.** Cast: *Joseph Ogden*, Mr. Charles Brookfield; *The Earl of Bawcombe*, Mr. Eric Lewis; *The Hon. Stacey Gillam*, Mr. Charles Hawtrey; *Mr. Tweed*, Mr. Henry Kemble; *Robert Peploe*, Mr. Cecil Ramsey; *Charles Glenthorne*, Mr. W. T. Lovell; *Bigsby*, Mr. Wm. F. Hawtrey; *Lady Gwendolen Ogden*, Miss Compton; *Letitia Ogden*, Miss Alice Mansfield; *Emily Rawston*, Miss Nina Boucicault; *Celes-*

tine, Miss Nina Cadiz; *Mrs. Jauncey*, Mrs. Charles Calvert; *Mrs. Cyrus N. Dowker*, Miss Lottie Venne. Still running.

19. WHEN THE CAT'S AWAY: Operetta by A. Kenward Matthews; music by Bond Andrews. Cast: *Miss Ogle*, Mr. Huntley Wright; *Miss Cynthia*, Miss Minnie Thurgate; *Miss Beatrice*, Miss Lettice Fairfax; *Agnes*, Miss Fannie Marriott; *Charley*, Mr. Scott Russell; *Bertie*, Mr. Templar Saxe. — And **THE TRANSFERRED GHOST:** Comedietta by Neville Lynn; music by John Crook. Cast: *Benjamin Nicholas Hayes*, Mr. F. Vincent Walker; *Algernon Pottinger Jones*, Mr. Frank A. Walsh; *Madeline Angela Hayes*, Miss Cassie Bruce; *Mrs. Simkin*, Miss Mary Desmond; *The Ghost*, Mr. F. Vincent Walker. Afternoon performance at the **Garrick**, for the benefit of the Theatrical Choristers' Association.

23. LITTLE EYOLF: Three Act Play, by Henrik Ibsen, translated by William Archer. **Avenue.** Cast: *Alfred Allmers*, Mr. Courtenay Thorpe; *Mrs. Rita Allmers*, Miss Janet Achurch; *Eyolf*, Master Stewart Dawson; *Miss Asta Allmers*, Miss Elizabeth Robins; *Engineer Borgheim*, Mr. C. M. Lowne; *The Rat Wife*, Mrs. Patrick Campbell. Produced for a short series of afternoon performances. Put in the evening bill 30th November, with Mrs. Patrick Campbell as Rita. Withdrawn 19th December.

25. THE BELLS. Lyceum. Twenty-fifth anniversary performance.

27. THE KISS OF DELILAH: Three Act Play, by George Grant and James Lyle. **Drury Lane.** Cast: *Maximilian Robespierre*, Mr. Herman Vezin; *Collet d'Herbois*, Mr. Brooke Warren; *Hannibal Legendre*, Mr. Sam Johnson; *Coupe Tete*, Mr. Edward O'Neill; *Guyrot*, Mr. Palmer; *Chapuy*, Mr. Philip Darwen; *Jacques*, Mr. Morgan; *Pierre*, Mr. Arthur Vezin; *Sergeant of the National Guard*, Mr. Woburn; *Hermine Vanhove*, Miss Hilda Spong; *Estelle Beaupas*, Miss Edith Jordan; *Francois Joseph Talma*, Mr. T. B. Thalberg. Played once only.

DECEMBER.

2. AS YOU LIKE IT: Shakespeare's Comedy. Revival at the **St. James's**. Cast: *Duke*, Mr. James Fernandez; *Frederick*, Mr. C. Aubrey Smith; *Amiens*, Mr. Bertram Wallis; *Jaques*, Mr. W. H. Vernon; *First Lord*, Mr. W. H. Vincent; *Second Lord*, Mr. G. Bancroft; *Le Beau*, Mr. Vincent Sternroyd; *Charles*, Mr. J. Wheeler; *Oliver*, Mr. H. B. Irving; *Jaques de Bois*, Mr. R. Loraine; *Orlando*, Mr. George Alexander; *Adam*, Mr. Henry Loraine; *Dennis*, Mr. A. W. Munro; *Touchstone*, Mr. H. V. Esmond; *Corin*, Mr. W. H. Day; *Sylvius*, Mr. Arthur Royston; *William*, Mr. George P. Hawtrej; *Hymen*, Miss Julia F. Opp; *Rosalind*, Miss Julia Neilson; *Celia*, Miss Fay Davis; *Phoebe*, Miss Dorothea Baird; *Audrey*, Miss Kate Phillips. An afternoon performance. Transferred to the evening programme, 3rd December. Still running.

5. THE CIRCUS GIRL: Musical Play by James T. Tanner and W. Palings; music by Ivan Caryll and Lionel Monckton. **Gaiety**. Cast: *Dick Capel*, Mr. Seymour Hicks; *Sir Titus Wemyss*, Mr. Harry Monkhouse; *Drivelli*, Mr. Arthur Williams; *The Hon. Reginald Gower*, Mr. Lionel Mackinder; *Auguste*, Mr. Willie Ward; *Adolphe*, Mr. Bertie Wright; *Albertoni*, Mr. Colin Coop; *Commissaire of Police*, Mr. Robert Nainby; *Vicomte Gaston*, Mr. Maurice Farkoa; *Toothpick Pasha*, Mr. Arthur Hope; *Rudolph*, Mr. E. D. Wardes; *Proprietor of Café*, Mr. Leslie Holland; *Flobert*, Mr. Robert Selby; *Cocker*, Mr. W. F. Brooke; *Sergeant de Ville*, Mr. Fred Ring; *Valliand*, Mr. W. H. Powell; *Biggs*, Mr. Edmund Payne; *Ducille*, Miss Katie Seymour; "*La Favorita*," Miss Ethel Haydon; *Mrs. Drivelli*, Miss Connie Ediss; *Lady Diana Wemyss*, Miss Maria Davis; *Marie*, Miss Grace Palotta; *Louise*, Miss Lily Johnson; *Liane*, Miss Louie Coote; *Emile*, Miss Alice Betelle; *Juliette*, Miss Maidie Hope; *Comtesse d'Epenay*, Miss Ada Maitland; *Marquise de Millefleurs*, Miss Kathleen Francis; *Mdlle. Gompson*, Miss Alice Neilson; *Dora Wemyss*, Miss Ellaline Terriss. Still running.

8. WOMAN'S WORLD: Comedy in Three Acts, by J. P. Hurst. An afternoon performance. **Court.** Cast : *Keith Dunlop*, Mr. Joseph Carne ; *Ulric Falshawe*, Mr. George Hip-
pisle ; *Sebastian Meggeson*, Mr. Compton Coutts ; *Kelland Smith*, Mr. Frederick Volpe ; *Harry Glynn*, Mr. Ivan Watson ;
Constance Glynn, Miss Esme Beringer ; *Lucy Maitland*, Miss
Jessie Bateman ; *Anna Gibbs, M.D.*, Miss M. Talbot ; *Jane McKillop*, Miss Alice Beet ; *Charlotte Bap*, Miss Marie Lyons ;
Mrs. Lascelles, Miss Spencer Brunton ; *Barbara Earp*, Miss
Adela Weekes.

8. THE ANTI-MATRIMONIAL SOCIETY: Play
in One Act, by Emily Beauchamp. An afternoon perform-
ance. **Strand.** Cast : *Colonel Lovelace*, Mr. Trevor Lowe ;
Captain Frank Grahame, Mr. Jack Warrington ; *Pat O'Connor*,
Mr. Charles Kenny ; *Ethel Lovelace*, Miss Valde Wynne ; *Clara Biggs*,
Miss Cynthia Granville ; *Miss Elsie Manley*, Miss Ruby
Wyndham ; *Ina Fortescue*, Miss V. Le Dain ; *Jessie Arundel*,
Miss Marie Thornhill ; *Laura Maitland*, Miss Marie Bates ;
Annie Singleton, Miss Beatrice Parke ; *Maud Mayflower*,
Miss Josephine Bennett ; *Cissy Scissors*, Miss Audrey Littleton ;
Selina Pringle, Mrs. Stanislaus Calhaem.—Also **YES OR NO:** Play in Three Acts, by Emily Beauchamp. Originally
produced at the Theatre Royal, Dublin, 2nd May 1877. Cast :
Mr. Dunlop, Mr. Charles Seymour ; *Sir Ralph Cleverley*,
Baronet, Mr. Aubrey Fitzgerald ; *Jack Westaway*, Mr. Trevor
Lowe ; *John Winter*, Mr. Calvert ; *Katrine Dunlop*, Miss Eileen
Munro ; *Milly Mayfield*, Mrs. Bennett ; *Matilda Macintyre*,
Miss Emily Beauchamp.

10. SWEET NANCY: Play adapted by Robert
Buchanan from Rhoda Broughton's novel, "Nancy." First
played at the Lyric Theatre on 12th July 1890 ; now revived
(a morning performance) at the **Criterion.** Cast : *General Sir Roger Tempest*, Mr. Edmund Maurice ; *Frank Musgrave*,
Mr. C. M. Hallard ; *Mr. Gray*, Mr. Charles Rock ; *Algernon Gray*,
Mr. Martin Harvey ; *Bobby*, Mr. Kenneth Douglas ; *The Brat*,
Master Grose ; *Pemberton*, Mr. Claude Edmonds ; *Mrs. Gray*,
Miss Henrietta Cowen ; *Barbara Gray*, Miss Lena Ash-

well; *Nancy Gray*, Miss Annie Hughes; *Theresa Gray*, Miss Marion Bishop; *Mrs. Huntley*, Miss Helen Ferrars.—Also **AN OLD SONG**: One Act Piece by the Rev. Freeman Wills and A. Fitzmaurice King. Cast: *Rouget de Lisle*, Mr. Martin Harvey; *Ravachol*, Mr. Lionel Belmore; *Signora Sara Rosetti*, Miss May Whitty; *Angèle*, Miss N. de Sylva.

19. KING RICHARD III.: Shakespeare's Tragedy. Revival at the **Lyceum**. Cast: *Richard, Duke of Gloster*, Sir Henry Irving; *King Edward IV.*, Mr. Gordon Craig; *George, Duke of Clarence*, Mr. Cooper Cliffe; *Henry, Earl of Richmond*, Mr. Frank Cooper; *Cardinal Bouchier*, Mr. Cushing; *Duke of Buckingham*, Mr. F. H. Macklin; *Duke of Norfolk*, Mr. Lacy; *Lord Rivers*, Mr. Fuller Mellish; *Lord Hastings*, Mr. Ben Webster; *Lord Stanley*, Mr. Frederick Robinson; *Lord Lovel*, Mr. Archer; *The Marquis of Dorset*, Mr. Howard; *The Bishop of Ely*, Mr. Reynolds; *Sir Richard Ratcliffe*, Mr. Belmore; *Sir William Catesby*, Mr. Tyars; *Sir James Tyrrell*, Mr. Clarence Hague; *Sir Robert Brackenbury*, Mr. Martin Harvey; *Lord Mayor of London*, Mr. Tabb; *An Officer*, Mr. Rivington; *First Murderer*, Mr. Norman Forbes; *Second Murderer*, Mr. William Farren, Jun.; *King's Page*, Miss Edith Craig; *Edward, Prince of Wales*, Miss Lena Ashwell; *Richard, Duke of York*, Miss Norman; *Elizabeth*, Miss Maud Milton; *Duchess of York*, Miss Mary Rorke; *Lady Anne*, Miss Julia Arthur; *Margaret*, Miss Genevieve Ward. Temporarily withdrawn after one performance owing to an accident to Sir Henry Irving. **CYMBELINE** reproduced 26th December.

21. THE EIDER-DOWN QUILT: Farcical Comedy in Three Acts, by Tom S. Wootton. **Terry's**. Cast: *Alberto de Bologna*, Mr. H. De Lange; *Sir John de Dandebek*, J. P., Mr. Nicol Pentland; *Captain Bernard*, Mr. Arthur Playfair; *Dick*, Mr. A. E. Matthews; *Peter Mumforth*, Mr. Frederick Volpe; *Colenutt*, Mr. Charles Terric; *Sybil*, Miss Audrey Ford; *Lucy Pemberton*, Miss Ethel Matthews; *Rosamund Dennison*, Miss Spence Brunton; *Patricia*, Miss Fanny Brough. —Also **IN MARY'S COTTAGE**: Play in One Act, by

Charles Beckwith. Cast : *Dick Grantley*, Mr. Sydney Brough ; *Mark Bassett*, Mr. Charles Terric ; *Mrs. Purritt*, Mrs. Campbell Bradley ; *Jane Spark*, Miss Dora Barton ; *Mary*, Miss Winifred Fraser. Still running.

21. JEDBURY, JUNIOR: Comedy in Four Acts, by Madeleine Lucette Ryley. Revival at the **Globe**. Cast : *Christopher Jedbury, Junior*, Mr. H. Reeves Smith ; *Christopher Jedbury, Senior*, Mr. Sydney Paxton ; *Major Hedway*, Mr. Gordon Tompkins ; *Tom Bellaby*, Mr. Wilfred Draycott ; *Mr. Glibb*, Mr. F. Newton Lindo ; *Mr. Simpson*, Mr. Wilfred Heriot ; *Whimper*, Mr. Harry Farmer ; *Job*, Mr. Duncan Tovey ; *Mrs. Jedbury, Senior*, Miss Claire Pauncefort ; *Mrs. Glibb*, Miss Mabel Lane ; *Nellie Jedbury*, Miss Emmie Merrick ; *Dora Hedway*, Miss Annie L. Aumonier. — Also **THE MUFF OF THE REGIMENT** : Play in One Act, by Henry T. Johnson. Cast : *Lieut. the Hon. S. Tibbitts*, Mr. W. Heriot ; *Lieut. Jack Melrose*, Mr. Harry Farmer ; *Angus Crosby*, Mr. Sydney Paxton ; *Trooper Kilson*, Mr. Duncan Tovey ; *Florence Forester*, Miss Blanche Wolseley ; *Helty*, Miss Lettice Fairfax. Still running.

23. BLACK EY'D SUSAN: Douglas Jerrold's Nautical Drama. Revived at the **Adelphi**. Cast : *William*, Mr. William Terris ; *Captain Crosstree*, Mr. Charles Fulton ; *Hatchett*, Mr. Oscar Adye ; *Baker*, Mr. J. H. Brewer ; *Doggrass*, Mr. J. D. Beveridge ; *Admiral*, Mr. Luigi Lablache ; *Jacob Twigg*, Mr. Cyril Melton ; *Gnatbrain*, Mr. Harry Nicholls ; *Blue Peter*, Mr. Charles Fulton ; *Seaweed*, Mr. Jarvis Widdicombe ; *Quin*, Mr. Webb Darleigh ; *Lieut. Pike*, Mr. William Dempsey ; *Ploughshare*, Mr. Vincent ; *Susan*, Miss Milward ; *Dolly Mayflower*, Miss Vane Featherstone. — Also **ALL THAT GLITTERS IS NOT GOLD** : By T. and J. Morton. Cast : *Sir Arthur Lassells*, Mr. Luigi Lablache ; *Jasper Plum*, Mr. J. D. Beveridge ; *Stephen Plum*, Mr. Charles Fulton ; *Frederick Plum*, Mr. Oscar Adye ; *Toby Twinkle*, Mr. Harry Nicholls ; *Harris*, Mr. Jarvis Widdicombe ; *Lady Valeria*, Miss Margaret Halstan ; *Lady Leatherbridge*,

Miss Kate Kearney; *Martha Gibbs*, Miss Vane Featherstone. Still running.

24. THE PILGRIM'S PROGRESS: Mystery Play, with Music, in Four Acts, by G. G. Collingham, founded on John Bunyan's allegory. **Olympic.** Cast: *Apollyon*, Mr. W. L. Abingdon; *Gloriosus*, Mr. Frank Celli; *Fair-speech*, Mr. Arnold Lucy; *Holdworld*, Mr. Quinton Pearson; *Thankless*, Mr. Gilbert Buckton; *Vainhope*, Mr. W. E. Sauter; *Dives*, Mr. Jack Cole; *Pamper*, Mr. Gilbert Porteous; *Graspall*, Mr. Edwin Shepherd; *Slave*, Mr. George Wallis; *Slave*, Mr. Guy Fane; *Speranza*, Miss Esme Beringer; *Isolde*, Miss Roma St. John Brenon; *Iris*, Miss Frances Stuart Innes; *Malignity*, Miss Laura Johnson; *Fidelia*, Miss Juliette D'Erviex; *Raphael*, Mr. Courtenay Thorpe; *Faithful*, Mr. George W. Cockburn; *Death*, Mr. Lesly Thompson; *Giant Despair*, Mr. John Webb; *Bertram*, Mr. W. Melville; *Simple*, Mr. H. J. Cole; *Mammon*, Mr. Dudley Clinton; *Timeserver*, Mr. Reginald Waller; *Presumption*, Mr. Hubert Evelyn; *Sloth*, Mr. J. R. Melton; *Slave*, Mr. L. T. Thomas; *Melusina*, Miss Emily Fitzroy; *Sabra*, Miss Irene San Carolo; *Crafty*, Miss Maud St. John; *Dame Gossip*, Miss Nettie Hooper; *Mistress Timorous*, Miss Maud Locker; *Christian*, Miss Grace Hawthorne. Still running.

24. THE KEY TO KING SOLOMON'S RICHES, LIMITED: A "Rhodesian" Drama in Four Acts, by Miss Abbey St. Ruth. **Opera Comique.** Cast: *Hugh Baring*, Mr. E. H. Vanderfelt; *Copfall*, Mr. F. Macdonnell; *Lazarus*, Mr. J. A. Arnold; *Crawler*, Mr. Gilbert Yorke; *Harry Grice*, Mr. Ernest Bertram; *Hans van Zyl*, Mr. Frederick Lane; *Colonel Yates*, Mr. Percy Murray; *Pat Murphy*, Mr. Harry Paulton, Jun.; *McLimo*, Mr. John H. Manley; *Downey*, Mr. Bernard Lyell; *Rhodes*, Mr. Lawrence Sterner; *Jarge Kawgreen*, Mr. W. P. Warren-Smith; *Sam*, Miss Agnes Paulton; *Farni*, Miss Thea Lesbrooke; *Adolphus Zasharias Sillytoe*, Mr. Norman Grahame; *Arnott*, Mr. Stuart Adair; *Slumper*, Mr. F. Mason; *The Gutter Broker*, Mr. Thomas Verner; *Sigmund*, Mr. G. Sargeant; *Klass*, Mr. Stroud; *Ruth Baring*,

Miss Abbey St. Ruth; *Cissy Grant*, Miss Mabel Hardinge; *Madame Raphael*, Miss Thornton; *Matilda Perkins*, Mrs. Mat Robson; *Jane*, Miss Marianne Caldwell. The Matabele Quartette, by Misses Lal Price, Nancy Stewart, Emma Parry, and Phyllis Desmond. Still running.

25. ALADDIN: Pantomime, Words by Arthur Sturges and Horace Lennard; Music by Oscar Barrett. **Drury Lane.** Cast: *Aladdin*, Miss Ada Blanche; *Princess Badroulbador*, Miss Decima Moore; *Sau-See*, Miss Clara Jecks; *Pekoe*, Miss Helene Pillans; *Spirit of Life*, Miss Florence Darley; *Genius of the Ring*, Miss G. Somerset; *Slave of the Ring*, Mme. Grigolati; *Mrs. Twankay*, Mr. Dan Leno; *Abanazar*, Mr. Herbert Campbell; *Chief Constable*, Mr. Fred Griffiths; *Washee-Washee*, Mr. Joe Griffiths; *Slave of the Lamp*, Paul Cinquevalli; *The Emperor*, Mr. Walker Marnock; *Grand Vizier*, Mr. Fritz Rimma; *Dancing Master*, Mr. Ernest D'Auban. Still running.

29. BETSY: Comedy in Three Acts, adapted by F. C. Burnand from "Bebe," by M. Hannequin and Najac. Revival at the **Criterion**. Cast: *Mr. Alexander Birkett*, Mr. Alfred Bishop; *Mr. Adolphus Birkett*, Mr. Aubrey Boucicault; *Captain McManus*, Mr. J. H. Barnes; *Richard Talbot*, Mr. Kenneth Douglas; *Mr. Samuel Dawson*, Mr. James Welch; *Barber*, Mr. C. Edmonds; *Mrs. Birkett*, Miss Carlotta Addison; *Mrs. McManus*, Miss M. Clayton; *Madame Polenta*, Miss Sybil Carlisle; *Nellie Bassett*, Miss Marion Bishop; *Grace Peyton*, Miss Deroy; *Servant*, Miss Dora Fellowes; *Betsy*, Miss Annie Hughes.—Preceded by F. W. Broughton's comedietta, **WHY WOMEN WEEP**. Cast: *Arthur Chandos*, Mr. F. H. Tyler; *Frank Dudley*, Mr. Kenneth Douglas; *Fritz*, Mr. A. E. George; *Dora*, Miss Sybil Carlisle; *Madge*, Miss E. Randolph. Still running.

N.B.—Throughout this Synopsis, "still running" means on December 31, 1896. There is an error in the case of "The Prisoner of Zenda," produced on January 7 and withdrawn November 28.

OTHER LONDON PANTOMIMES.

Brixton, Cinderella ; *Borough, Stratford*, The Forty Thieves ; *Britannia*, The Giant and the Dwarf ; *Elephant and Castle*, Three Blind Mice ; *Grand, Croydon*, Robinson Crusoe ; *Grand, Islington*, Cinderella ; *Lyric, Hammersmith*, Babes in the Wood ; *Metropole, Camberwell*, Aladdin ; *Morton's, Greenwich*, The Forty Thieves ; *Novelty*, Little Red Riding Hood ; *Park-hurst*, Sinbad the Sailor ; *Pavilion*, Cinderella ; *Shakespeare, Clapham*, The Forty Thieves ; *Standard*, Mother Goose ; *Surrey*, Sinbad ; *West London*, Aladdin.

Outlying and Suburban Theatres.

JANUARY.

6. OUR GUARDIAN ANGEL: Drama in Four Acts, by Clarence Burnette. First played in the Provinces. **Novelty.**

13. OUR SAILOR LAD: Musical Comedy in Three Acts; Libretto by Frederick J. Kirke; Music by George Dixon. Originally produced at Bootle, 6th May 1895. **Novelty.**

20. THE DAWN OF HOPE: Drama in a Prologue and Four Acts, by Clarence Burnette and Herbert B. Cooper. Originally produced in the Provinces. **Novelty.**

FEBRUARY.

3. GELERT; OR, EVERY DOG HAS HIS DAY: One Act Piece, by Don Balsilio.—Also **AUNT REBECCA:** Farce, by Alban Atwood and Russell Vaun; first played at the Opera House, Cheltenham, 19th December 1895. **Kilburn.**

17. LORDS OF CREATION: Comedietta, by A. E. Drinkwater. First played at the New Theatre, Oxford, 4th February 1895. **Kilburn.**

17. EVENTIDE: Play in One Act, by W. Crichton. Produced at the Theatre Royal, Middlesbrough, 5th August 1895. **Parkhurst.**

24. TOMMY ATKINS: Melodrama, by Arthur Shirley and Benjamin Landeck. Revival at the **Pavillon**, with Mr. Murray Carson as *Harold Wilson*.

MARCH.

2. THE SILVER HORSESHOE: Romantic Naval Drama, by St. Aubyn Miller. Originally produced at the Aquarium, Brighton, 4th February 1895. **Novelty.**

2. THE RAID IN THE TRANSVAAL; OR, THE KING OF DIAMONDS. First played at the Surrey, 12th April 1894, as "The King of Diamonds"; now reproduced there.

10. LA GITANA: Opera in Two Acts; Libretto by Leslie Moreton; Music by Stephen Philpots. First played at the Theatre Royal, South Shields, 22nd November 1895. **Parkhurst.** Valentine Smith Opera Company.

23. THE GAY PARISIENNE: Musical Comedy in Two Acts, by George Dance. Originally produced at the Opera House, Northampton, 1st October 1894; now first done in London at the **Elephant and Castle.** Mr. G. P. Hunter as *Honeycomb*; Miss Nellie Murray as *Julie Bonbon*.

23. BROTHER AGAINST BROTHER: Drama in Five Acts, by Frank Harvey. First played at the Lyceum Theatre, Ipswich, 10th August 1895. **Lyric,** Hammersmith.

24. MERCEDES: Opera in Three Acts, founded on Longfellow's "Spanish Student," by Daniele Pellegrini; Libretto by Augusto Ardori; English version by Fred Wood. First played at Leinster Hall, Dublin, 11th January 1896. **Grand.** Arthur Rousby Opera Company.

30—April 2. Season of Yiddish Plays. **Novelty.**

APRIL.

6. BELOW LONDON BRIDGE: Drama in Four Acts, by Richard Dowling.—Also **THE NEW AGENT:** Musical Comedietta by R. Lindo; Music by H. Lindo. **Novelty.**

13. A WIFE'S DEVOTION: Drama, by J. H. Darnley and George Manville Fenn. **West London.**

13. UNDER THE CZAR: Drama in Four Acts, by Frederick Jarman. Originally produced at the Colosseum, Oldham, on 9th July 1894. **Elephant and Castle.**

15. A SINLESS SECRET: Domestic Drama in Three Acts, by Marie Edward Saker.—Also **THE PITY OF IT:** An Incident in One Act, by Ian Robertson. **Lyric, Ealing.**

18. LIMITED: Comedy in Three Acts, by Robert Blake. Originally produced at the Theatre Royal, Richmond, on 17th January 1895, as "Skittles Limited."—Also **MICHAEL DANE'S GRANDSON:** A One Act Play, by Ina Leon Cassilis. **Lyric, Hammersmith.**

20. AT BAY: Drama in a Prologue and Four Acts, by Ina Leon Cassilis. Originally produced at Ladbroke Hall, 9th April 1888. **Novelty.**

23. THE SPY: One Act Play, by H. M. Paull. **Lyric, Ealing.**

MAY.

4. THE FRENCH MAID: Musical Comedy in Two Acts; Words by Basil Hood; Music by Walter Slaughter. Originally produced at the Theatre Royal, Bath, 4th April 1896. **Metro-pole, Camberwell.** Cast: *Admiral Sir Hercules Hawser*, Mr. H. O. Clarey; *General Sir Drummond Fife*, Mr. Charles Thorburn; *Lieutenant Harry Fife*, Mr. Spenser Kelly; *The Maharajah of Poonah*, Mr. Percy Percival; *Charles Brown*, Mr. Windham Guise; *Jack Brown*, Mr. Joseph Wilson; *Paul Lecruse*, Mr. Arthur Watts; *Monsieur Cammibert*, Mr. Murray King; *Alphonse*, Mr. C. Tallent; *Dorothy Travers*, Miss Louie Pounds; *Lady Hawser*, Miss Caroline Ewell; *Madame Cammibert*, Miss Lillie Pounds; *Suzette*, Miss Andree Corday.

11. DR. JOHNSON: Play in One Act, by Leo Trevor.—Also **THRILLBY:** Burlesque, by W. Muskerky and F. Osmond Carr. **Richmond.**

11. VENUS: Farical Sketch, by Jessie Robertson. **Novelty.**

19. SPORT; OR, THE QUEEN'S BOUNTY: Musical Comedy in Two Acts, by Montagu Turner and W. E. Sprange; Music by Thomas Hunter. First played at the Theatre Royal, Plymouth, 30th March 1896. **Parkhurst.**

JUNE.

1. THE VICTORIA STAKES: Dramatic Sketch, by E. Skuse. **Novelty.**

1. UNDER REMAND: Drama in Four Acts, by Reginald Stockton and Eric Hudson. Originally produced at the Theatre Royal, Bolton, 23rd July 1894. **Surrey.**

1. ONE OF THE GIRLS: Musical Play, Book by J. J. Dallas and Herbert Darnley; various composers. First played at the Grand Theatre, Birmingham, 9th March 1896. **Metro-pole.**

8. THE TWO HUSSARS: Military Drama in Four Acts, by Walter Burnot and Harry Bruce. Originally produced at the Theatre Royal, Darwen, 4th August 1894. **Surrey.**

8. THE WANDERER FROM VENUS; OR, TWENTY-FOUR HOURS WITH AN ANGEL: Fanciful Comedy in Three Acts, by Robert Buchanan and Charles Marlowe. Cast: *Claude Somerville*, Mr. Oswald Yorke; *John Middleton, M.D.*, Mr. G. W. Anson; *Dr. Dullamere*, Mr. J. Beauchamp; *Dora*, Miss Harriet Jay; *Euphemia*, Miss Eva Moore; *Mrs. Allgood*, Miss Louisa Gourlay; *Stella*, Miss Kate Rorke. **Grand, Croydon.**

11. THE THREE HATS: New Version of Alfred Hennequin's *Les Trois Chapeaux*, by H. Cory Woodrow.—Also **THE NEW HOUSEKEEPER:** Comedietta in One Act, by F. Lumsden Hare; Music by David Barone. **Ealing.**

15. THE SERPENT'S COIL: Drama in Five Acts, by E. Hill Mitcheson and C. H. Longden. Originally produced at the Theatre Royal, West Hartlepool, 23rd December 1895. **Surrey.**

22. THE SCEPTIC: Play in One Act, by Hilton Hill. **Metropole.**

22. FATHER SATAN: Drama in Five Acts, by Harry F. Spiers. **Britannia.**

29. WHEN GREEK MEETS GREEK: Romantic Drama in Four Acts, adapted by Joseph Hatton from his novel of the same name. Originally produced at the Theatre Royal, St. Helens, 23rd March 1896, as "The Roll of the Drum." **Surrey.** Mr. Murray Carson as *Grebauval* and *Count de Fournier*; Miss Essex Dane as *Mathilde de Louvet*.

JULY.

6. GREED OF GOLD: Drama in Four Acts. Originally produced in the Provinces, by H. R. Silva. **Surrey.**

13. THE FOOTBALL KING: Drama in Four Acts, by George Gray. **Elephant and Castle.**

13. THE SON OF A SINNER: One Act Play, by Fred F. Forshaw.—Also **THE LADY VOLUNTEERS:** Comedietta in One Act, by Miss Sidney Phelps. **Parkhurst.**

27. THE TELEPHONE GIRL: Musical Comedy adapted from Desvallière's and Feydeau's *La Demoiselle du Téléphone*; Libretto by Augustus Harris, F. C. Burnand, and Arthur Sturges; Music by Gaston Serpette and J. M. Glover. Originally produced at Wolverhampton, 25th May 1896. **Metropole.** Cast: *Dick Wimple*, Mr. Charles Wibrow; *Sylvester Bartrum*, Mr. Charles Angels; *Bartholomew Pilchard*, Mr. Fred Emney; *Murry Anne*, Miss Jane Grey; *Dolly Dobbs*, Mdlle. Marguerita Sylva; *Prince Imatoff*, Mr. Fritz Rimma; *James*, Mr. J. T. Macmillan; *Miss Berry McNabb*, Miss Alice Barnett; *Lottie*, Miss Ada Blanche.

27. MY GOOD NAME: One Act Play, by Eardley Turner. First played at the Artillery Theatre, Woolwich, 24th February 1895. **Lyric**, Hammersmith.

31. A DAUGHTER OF ISHMAEL: Drama in Four Acts, by W. J. Patmore. Originally produced at the St. James's Theatre, Manchester, as "Miriam Grey; or, the Living Dead," 20th July 1896. **Lyric**, Hammersmith.

AUGUST.

3. AGAINST THE TIDE: Drama in Four Acts, by F. A. Scudamore. **Surrey.** Cast: *Jack Tempest*, Mr. Ernest E. Norris; *Robert Tempest*, Mr. George Conquest, Jun.; *Erasmus Grimley*, Mr. Frank Lister; *Hermann Grimley*, Mr. John Webb; *Allen Desmond*, Mr. Charles Cruikshanks; *Charles Ashcroft*, Mr. Fred Conquest; *Napoleon Nixey*, Mr. Edward Lennox; *Captain Tullano*, Mr. Reuben Leslie; *Mr. Rushton*, Mr. Arthur Hall; *Shanks*, Mr. Miller; *Bolton Fox*, Mr. E. Ball; *Miss Dales*, Miss Percival; *Ruby*, Miss Kate Olga Vernon; *Sophie Vine*, Miss Cissy Farrell; *Queenie*, Miss Laura Dyson.

3. STRAIGHT FROM THE HEART: Drama in Four Acts, by Sutton Vane and Arthur Shirley. **Pavillon.** Cast: *Dr. David Walton*, Mr. Ashley Page; *Captain Nugent*, *R.N.R.*, Mr. G. W. Cockburn; *Harold Nugent*, Miss Rachel de Solla; *Ventry Fox*, Mr. Albert Marsh; *Louis Raymond*, Mr. Julian Cross; *Hawkshaw Dixon*, Mr. Maitland Marler; *Frazer Fry*, Mr. H. F. McClelland; *Joe Gloster*, Mr. Lennox Pawle; *M. Delorme*, Mr. Herbert Pearson; *Lieutenant Rosney*, Mr. Bernard Liell; *The Rev. Lewis Hedges*, Mr. Charles Cecil; *Aleor Gracholski*, Mr. H. Hamilton; *First Warder*, Mr. Godfrey; *Second Warder*, Mr. Ferry; *Pierre*, Mr. Romer; *Claria Nugent*, Miss Marion Denvil; *Lo'otte*, Miss Lilian Milward; *Maiana Raymond*, Mrs. Henry Hampton; *Sappho*, Miss Eva Waterlow; *The Love Bird*, Miss Yarrell; *Sister Rose*, Miss Kate Gladding.

3. TEDDY'S WIVES: Farcical Comedy, by Fergus Hume. (First time in London.) **Kilburn.**

3. A MERRY MADCAP: Comedy in Two Acts, by Victor Stevens. **Ealing.**

3. THE VENDETTA; OR, A LIFE'S CHANCES: Drama in Five Acts, by W. Higgins. **Britannia.**

10. BAGGING A BARRISTER: Duologue, by Reginald Stockton. **West London.**

24. THE KING'S HIGHWAY: Drama in Four Acts, adapted from Harrison Ainsworth's "Rookwood" by George Roberts and Frank Gerald. **West London.**

SEPTEMBER.

7. A SOCIETY SCANDAL: Musical Comedy, Book by Guy Logan; Music by Arnold Cook. Originally played at the Theatre Royal, South Shields, 31st August 1896. **Morton's, Greenwich.**

21. EN ROUTE: Musical Comedy in Two Acts, by Cecil Maxwell; Composed by Ernest Bucalossi; Lyrics by Walter Parke; additional numbers by Roland Carse and P. Bucalossi. **Parkhurst.** Cast: *Mr. John T. Smithe*, Mr. A. E. Chapman; *Ted Stanford*, Mr. Richard Temple, Jun.; *Colonel Curryman*, Mr. Herbert Shelley; *Bertie Langdale*, Mr. J. Willes Irwin; *Comte Gustave de Montpelier*, Mr. E. Webster Lawson; *Captain Johnson*, Mr. E. Ernest Boyd; *Ortori*, Mr. Reginald Clayton; *Third Officer*, Mr. Walter Gibbens; *Pat Cafferty*, Mr. Sam Wilkinson; *Mrs. John T. Smithe*, Miss Minnie Clifford; *Ethel*, Miss Eric Green; *Gracie*, Miss Emilie Wade; *Bella Stellarina*, Miss Stella May; *Lizzie*, Miss Ada Lee; *Lottie*, Miss Margot Frewin; *Daisy*, Miss Hilda Henley; *Maud*, Miss Geraldine Nelson; *Alice*, Miss Alice Ancliffe.

21. THE CO-RESPONDENT: Farcical Comedy, by G. W. Appleton. Originally produced at the Grand Theatre, Birmingham, 3rd August 1896; now played (first time in

London) at the **Metropole**. Cast: *Jack Cracklethorpe*, Mr. Charles Fawcett; *Harry Vance*, Mr. J. R. Melton; *Simeon G. Jell*, Mr. Charles Kent; *Tompkins*, Mr. Richard Blunt; *Williams*, Mr. A. W. Ford; *Dick Rafferty*, Mr. Frank Wyatt; *Rebecca Forrester*, Miss Lydia Thompson; *Dora Capper*, Miss Irene Rickards; *Rachel Dawe*, Miss Annie Goward; *Kate Forrester*, Miss Violet Melnotte.

28. SEALED TO SILENCE: Drama in Five Acts, by H. Vickers Rees and Smedly Norton. **Novelty.**

OCTOBER.

5. THE CRUEL CITY; OR, LONDON BY NIGHT: Drama in Four Acts, by Gertrude Warden and Wilton Jones. **Surrey.** Cast: *Geoffrey Darrell*, Mr. Ernest E. Norris; *Stanley Darrell*, Mr. Edward Lennox; *The Hon. Royce Gascoigne*, Mr. John Webb; *Bertie Browne*, Mr. Fred Conquest; *Joseph Fawley*, Mr. Charles Cruikshanks; *Carl Hartman*, Mr. George Conquest, Jun.; *Dr. Whitley*, Mr. Frank Lyster; *Inspector Banks*, Mr. Arthur Hall; *Dr. Felberman*, Mr. J. Miller; *Adolph Schaumberg*, Mr. E. Ball; *Kaspar*, Mr. Reuben Leslie; *Heinrich*, Mr. Powell; *Con Roper*, Mr. D. Darling; *Old Tommie*, Mr. C. Bowen; *Daddy Graves*, Mr. Evans; *Sam Settle*, Mr. Arthur Conquest; *Mr. Dillwyn*, Mr. H. Saunders; *Bill Hunks*, Mr. Besant; *Rose Heather*, Miss Kate Olga Vernon; *May Heather*, Miss Cissy Farrell; *Mrs. Lulu Bellingham*, Miss Florence E. Florence; *Auntie Baxter*, Miss C. Percival; *Our Sarah*, Miss Laura Dyson; *Miss Smith*, Miss M. Hall.

7. DEATH OR GLORY: Drama in Five Acts, by John Mill. **Britannia.**

12. A WOMAN'S GUILT: Drama in Three Acts, by Bernard Copping.—Also **SNATCHED FROM DEATH:** Drama in One Act, by Stephanie Baring and Walter Beaumont. **Novelty.**

12. JACK TAR: Drama in Five Acts, by Arthur Shirley and Ben Landeck. **Pavilion.** Cast: *Jack Atherley*, Mr. Ashley Page; *General Sir James Welby*, Mr. G. W. Cockburn; *Charles Welby*, Mr. Julian Cross; *Dicky Starling*, Mr. Maitland Marler; *Peter*, Mr. Lennox Pawle; *Alphonse Latour*, Mr. Albert Marsh; *Count Pietro Rubini*, Mr. Herbert Pearson; *Mark Atherley*, Mr. H. F. McClelland; *Ben Ardwell*, Mr. Charles Baldwin; *Captain Roberts*, Mr. Cecil; *Captain Neale*, Mr. H. Hamilton; *Captain Grey*, Mr. Ferry; *Second Officer*, Mr. F. Lawrence; *Maltese Cabman*, Mr. B. Rivers; *Joe Amory*, Mr. Brame; *Daddy Millett*, Mr. Ashton; *Amos*, Mr. James; *Officer*, Mr. F. Bousteed; *First Warden*, Mr. Godfrey; *Mary Westwood*, Miss Marion Denvil; *Nell*, Miss Edith Wallis; *Margherita*, Miss Rachel de Solla; *Liza Tibbels*, Mrs. Henry Hampton.

12. THE MERCILESS WORLD: Drama in Four Acts, by Herbert Leonard. **Lyric**, Hammersmith. Cast: *Jack Stanley*, Mr. Charles A. East; *Luke Raymond*, Mr. Graham Wentworth; *Pierre Gaston*, Mr. J. P. Dryden; *Steve Rogers*, Mr. Tom Taylor; *Teddy Ryley*, Mr. W. F. Lancey; *Sir George Stanley, K.C.B.*, Mr. R. Stilwell; *Henry Bradford*, Mr. William Yeldham; *Nick Burton*, Mr. H. C. Morton; *Landlord Armand*, Mr. H. Melton; *Inspector Lotes*, Mr. Martindill; *Prefect of Paris*, Mr. Peterson; *Governor of La Roquette*, Mr. James; *Warder Jacques*, Mr. Holdson; *Susan*, Miss Florence L. Forster; *Kate Rogers*, Miss East Robertson; *Laura Stanley*, Miss Hettie Chattell.

12. WHEN GEORGE THE FOURTH WAS KING: Play in One Act, by Frances W. Moore. First played at the Theatre Royal, Birmingham, 17th September 1896. **Grand.** Cast: *William Garden*, Mr. Charles Groves; *Joshua Dade*, Mr. Gilbert Hare; *Joliffe*, Mr. Frank Gillmore; *Mary Lewis*, Miss Mona K. Oram. Mr. John Hare's Company.—**A PAIR OF SPECTACLES, THE HOBBY-HORSE**, and **CASTE** were played during the engagement.

19. THE DAYS OF CROMWELL: Drama in a Prologue and Three Acts, by Charles Rogers and Carter Livesey. **Borough, Stratford.**

19. THE VICTORIA CROSS: Drama in Five Acts, by J. W. Whitbread. Originally produced at the Queen's Theatre, Dublin, 7th September 1896. **Theatre Royal, Stratford.**

23. EDMUND KEAN: Play in Five Acts, freely adapted from the French of Alexandre Dumas by T. Edgar Pemberton. First played at the Theatre Royal, West Hartlepool, 4th January 1895. **Metropole.** Cast: *Edmund Kean*, Mr. Edmund Compton; *Lord Murcott*, Mr. Sydney Leyton; *Sir Hugh Lidcombe*, Mr. Reginald Dartrey; *Tabberer*, Mr. Lewis Ball; *Tibbs*, Mr. R. J. Hesketh; *Charlie White*, Mr. Arthur Elsmere; *Fred Timberlake*, Mr. S. Cole Winton; *Simpson*, Mr. A. Keith Williams; *Helena*, Miss Sydney Crowe; *Amy Bellace*, Miss Gertrude Scott; *Ophelia*, Miss Mina Harrison; *Benskin*, Mr. Norman McKennell; *Cinderberry*, Mr. Clifford Bown; *Sikes Shekelton*, Mr. L. Race Dunrobin; *Bertha Sprigg*, Miss Bessie Thompson; *Mrs. Troup*, Miss Jessie Cross; *Fanny Ashworth*, Miss Rosie Parker; *Maria Brasbridge*, Miss Ada Maud.

NOVEMBER.

5. THE SUB-EDITOR: New Three Act Farce, by Edmund Payne and Cyril Harrison. **Brixton.** An afternoon performance. Cast: *Christopher Careless*, Mr. Percy F. Marshall; *William Jones*, Mr. L. Minton; *Benjamin Jumble*, Mr. Martin Adeson; *Pinkin Frescoe*, Mr. Lionel Mackinder; *Henry*, Mr. W. J. Manning; *Charles*, Mr. Tim Ryley; *P.C. 221 S.P.*, Mr. William H. Powell; *Hector*, Mr. Arthur Watt; *Tarradiddle Flukeham*, Mr. Edmund Payne; *Mrs. Careless*, Miss Violet Durkin; *Mrs. Jones*, Miss Alma Steele; *Mrs. Jumble*, Miss Hetty Chapman; *Eliza*, Miss Louie Gomersall; *Rosie Heath*, Miss Katie Seymour.

9. CARL THE CLOCKMAKER: Musical Play, by Harry Starr. First played at the Theatre Royal, Swansea, 16th July 1894. **West London.**

16. SURE TO WIN: Sporting Play in One Act, by W. H. Goldsmith. **Novelty.**

23. A BAFFLED CRIME: Drama in Four Acts, by C. W. McCabe. **Novelty.**

DECEMBER.

7. THE SPELLBOUND GARDEN: A Masque, by Louis N. Parker and Murray Carson. First played at the Royalty, Glasgow, 30th November 1896. Cast: *Child Vivian*, Mr. Murray Carson; *Clotho XIV.*, Mr. T. W. Percival; *Hermes*, Mr. John Willes; *Sir Grisfel*, Mr. T. P. Williamson; *The Lady Lissa*, Miss Eleanor Stirling; *The Princess Esme*, Miss Essex Dane. **Brixton.**

14. TWO MEN: Drama in Four Acts, by William Bourne. Previously played for a week at Cardiff. **West London.**

18. THE EXTRAORDINARY BEHAVIOUR OF MRS. JALLOWBY: Farcical Comedy in Three Acts, by Clive Brooke. **Novelty.**

21. THE GIRL OF MY HEART; OR, JACK ASHORE: Drama in Four Acts, by Herbert Leonard. **Surrey.**

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